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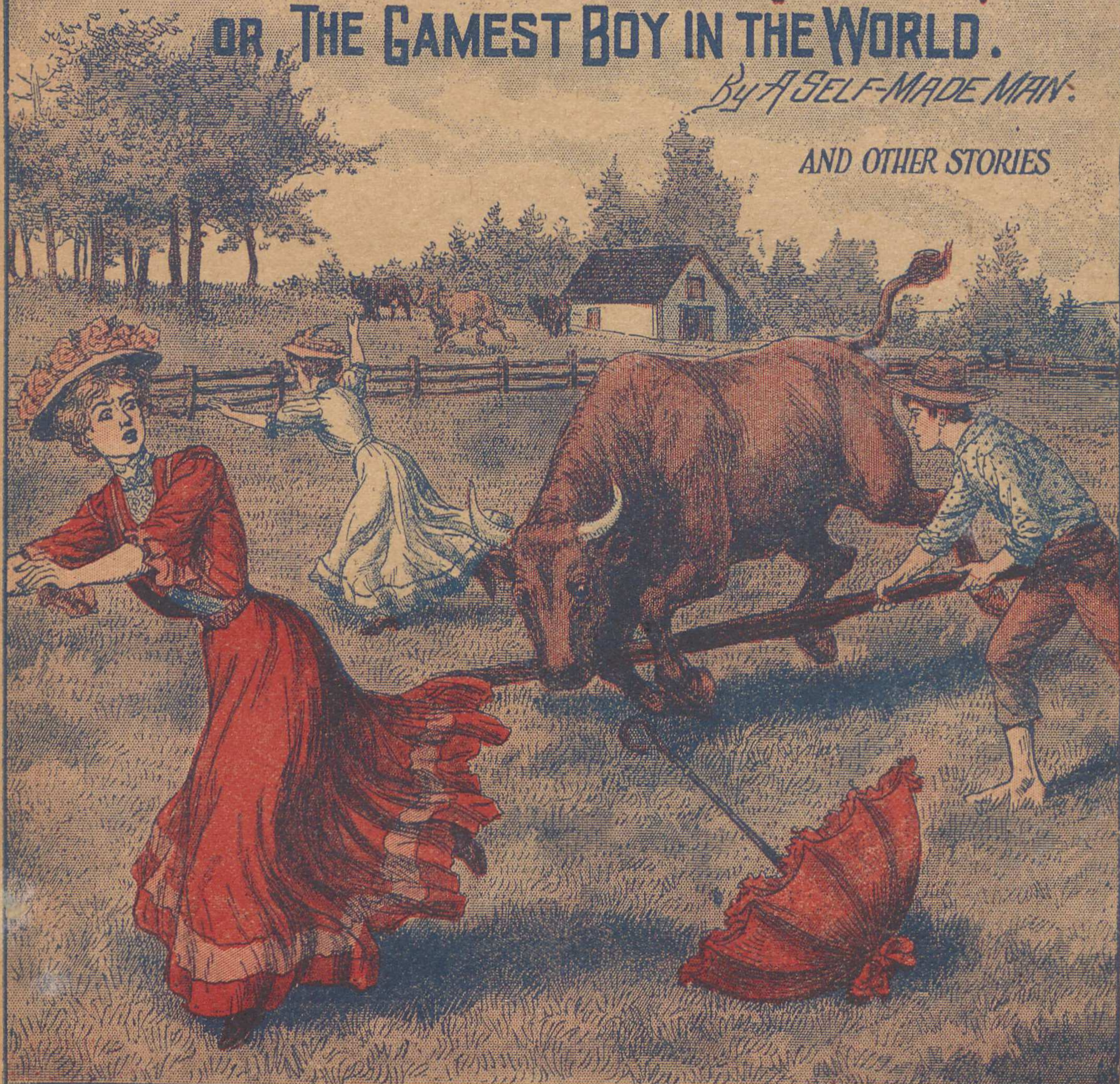
FAME AND FORTUNE

STORIES OF BOYS WEEKLY WHO MAKE MONEY.

A STRUGGLE FOR FAME; OR, THE GAMEST BOY IN THE WORLD.

By A SELF-MADE MAN.

AND OTHER STORIES



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FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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A STRUGGLE FOR FAME

OR, THE GAMEST BOY IN THE WORLD

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—The Boy Who Meant to Be Famous.

"Some day I mean to be famous," said Bob Rider, wagging his head in a determined manner.

Bob was seated on the bank of a small creek, fishing with a home-made rod, and his remarks were addressed to his particular friend, Sam Sumner, who was perched on a stone by his side engaged in the same amusement.

Sam grinned, for the idea that Bob would ever become famous in the sense to which he referred struck him as too funny for anything.

And, in good truth, Bob did not look at that moment like a boy destined to become a shining mark.

He was dressed in a well-worn suit of pepper-and-salt material, rather short at the ankles, which had been patched over and over again.

His curly brown head was covered with a straw thatch which might have adorned a scarecrow to better advantage.

In a word, he looked just what he was—a farm boy, pure and simple.

And yet Bob had a soul that soared away above the plodding life of an agriculturist.

He hated plowing, sowing, reaping, and mowing, not because of the hard work they entailed, but because the returns were, in his opinion, not commensurate with the amount of energy they demanded.

Besides, reading and observation had taught him that the most successful people in the world were those who worked with their brains.

Squire Harlow, lawyer, politician and justice of the peace, the most important man in the village, whose soft, white hands showed that they had never been soiled by manual labor, was one of the exhibits Bob used to prove his point.

Had Mr. Harlow established himself in a big city instead of at Paisley Village, Bob believed he would have become three times as wealthy as he was reputed to be.

Bob's ambitious ideas had been largely fostered by contact with the prosperous-looking summer boarders who came to Paisley and the farmhouses roundabout every year.

When Mrs. Rider, soon after becoming a widow, decided to add summer boarders to the farming industry, she named the place "Sunnyside Cot-

tage," for effect, though it was just a plain, old-fashioned, roomy house, built originally by Bob's grandfather.

She advertised accommodations for thirty-five boarders, and Bob often wondered where she would stow them in the house if such a bunch ever came at one time.

Twenty-five was more like her limit, when a third of them were children, and sometimes she had that number at once.

At the time our story opens it was the middle of June.

There were several boarders at the "Sunnyside" already—Mrs. Hamilton, and her daughter Stella, a very pretty and attractive girl, being the most important.

Bob was rather smitten with Stella, but he was careful to keep that fact to himself.

Sam Sumner, whose folks lived on the adjoining farm, was a frequent visitor at the Rider farm.

One reason for this was that he was Bob's chum; another was his sneaking regard for Polly Eccles, Mrs. Rider's maid-of-all-work.

Sam had come over this afternoon about five o'clock, and he easily persuaded Bob to shake work in the truck patch and go fishing.

The old mill creek, which ran through the Rider farm, was their fishing-ground, and they had been watching their floats without much success for a quarter of an hour when Bob made the remark which opens this chapter.

"How do you expect to get famous, Bob?" asked Sam, with some interest.

Bob cocked his eye up at his companion and said:

"You'll never guess, Sam."

"I s'pose not—that's why I asked you."

"If I tell you will you keep it to yourself?"

"Sure, I will."

"I don't want the matter to leak out, for the fellows would never give me a rest on the subject."

"It won't leak out through me. Now, tell me."

"I've written a play, Sam, and I believe it's a corker."

"You've written a play—for the theater?" ejaculated Sam, in astonishment.

"That's right," nodded Bob.

"I don't see how you could do it, though you are

the crack writer of the district school. What put the idea into your head?"

"You remember, mother had an actor boarding with us the greater part of last summer?"

"Yes. His name was William Richmond, wasn't it?"

"That was his name. You only saw a little of him because you were away at your uncle's place in Delaware most of the summer."

"What about him? Did he show you how to write a play?"

"Yes, he gave me a whole lot of points after I got the scheme well in my head. It came about in this way: When—hold on, I've got a bite!"

Bob yanked in his line with a silvery-looking, squirming object at the end of it, which he transferred to a patch of grass behind him, rebaited his hook and cast the line into the creek again.

"Go on with your play yarn," said Sam, impatiently.

Soon after Mr. Richmond came to board I was up in his room one day, for he and I had got quite chummy, talking with him about the matter. It was a rainy afternoon and he couldn't go out. He showed me the manuscript part of a play he was studying for the coming season. I asked him if I could read it, and he said I could, but that it would not interest me as much as if it was the whole play. He showed me that it was just his part, the 'heavy' part, as he called it, or villain, with the 'cues' and general 'business.' The cues were the last few words spoken by the performer in the scene with him, if the speech was longer than a short distance, and the business was the action of the play. I don't suppose you can understand just what I mean, but you would if I had a printed or written play here, for then I could explain the thing to you."

"Well, never mind that. I want to know how you came to write your play."

"Well, Mr. Richmond said he had a whole lot of printed plays, in complete form, in his trunk, and advised me to read one of them instead of his part. He picked one out for me and I read it that evening and was greatly interested in it. I always had a taste for the drama, anyway, but had never seen a printed play till that day. The result was, I wanted to read another. He handed me out a dozen, and I read them with more interest than any book I ever tackled in my life. In fact, I read every play of any account Mr. Richmond had in his trunk."

"How many did he have?"

"About a hundred."

"How could you read a hundred plays in two months?"

"I read about sixty of them in three weeks."

"You did?"

"Yes. They were not long. A few of them had 60 to 80 pages, but most of them ran from 24 to 48 pages."

"Is that all?"

"The shorter plays were old-fashioned pieces not performed any more. The plays performed nowadays are nearly all studied from manuscript and are not printed as formerly. Mr. Richmond explained to me that a new play is read to the actors engaged for it at the theater where the rehearsals are to be held. Then the parts are distributed to them for study. Whoever directs the

rehearsals handles the whole manuscript for reference."

"That's the way it's done, is it?"

"Yes. Well, Mr. Richmond told me that there was more money in a successful play than a successful book. That interested me, because I was figuring on writing a book myself, just to try my hand at it, for I had determined to be an author one of these days. I believe I'm cut out for that kind of work."

"I guess you could write a good story, all right; but a play—you're going to let me read the one you've made up, aren't you?"

"I guess so. I told Mr. Richmond one afternoon when he and I were fishing in the creek here that I intended making writing a business. He seemed surprised and asked me what I had done in that line. I told him that I had written a number of short stories for the village paper, and also that I had won the prize for the best essay at the close of the school term. Afterward he read several of the stories and glanced over the essay. He said my writing showed ability and promise. It was then I told him that I thought I'd like to write a play some time during the winter, and asked him if he would give me some points in addition to what I had picked up in the books. He said he would, and one rainy day we went over the matter together. He sketched out a plot, or scenario, as he called it, and divided it into four parts or acts. He laid out striking situations or climaxes for the first three acts, the most important of which wound up the third act. In fact, he made a complete skeleton play for my instruction—that is, everything but the actual writing of the dialogue—and then told me how each act ought to be written. I filled part of a copybook with notes, so that I wouldn't lose sight of any important particulars. We had other talks on the subject, and when he left for New York he gave me half a dozen of the printed plays for reference."

At that moment the boys were startled by a succession of girlish screams coming from a field behind them.

CHAPTER II.—The Accident at the Bridge.

Just then Sam got a bite, and while he was hauling in his line Bob sprang to his feet and ran to the fence close by to see what was the matter.

Two girls, whom Bob recognized as Stella Hamilton and Polly Eccles, were running across the field as hard as they could go, and screaming at the top of their voices.

Following them came a big red bull, belonging to the farm, which had broken through from an adjoining field occupied by three cows.

Stella Hamilton carried a red silk sunshade, and that doubtless was what attracted the animal.

Bob sprang on the fence and shouted to the girls to come that way.

Then he jumped into the field, seized one of the top rails and ran toward the frightened girls.

As Bob approached them the girls separated, Polly making a dash for the opposite fence.

"Bob, Bob! Save me, save me!" screamed Stella, dropping her sunshade at last and making a fresh effort to reach the fence which Sam was just climbing over.

The bull, lowering his head, rushed viciously at the fleeing girl.

Bob Rider, rushing forward to her assistance, dexterously shoved the long rail between the animal's forelegs.

The bull went down as if shot, jabbing his head into the red parasol.

"Quick, Miss Stella," cried Bob. "Sam will help you over the fence."

Then he braced himself to head the bull off again if he continued the pursuit.

The animal, however, had no further interest in the girl.

His attention was wholly taken up by the sunshade, which he tossed over his head and followed up for a fresh attack when it came down.

Bob saw that it would be foolish, as well as useless, to attempt to rescue the pretty sunshade from the angry animal.

In fact, its usefulness as a parasol was about over, for already there were two gaping rents in the silk.

So, leaving it to its fate, he threw the rail over his shoulder and ran toward the fence himself. Stella was on the other side, sitting on the grass, quite exhausted by her terror and hard run. Bob replaced the rail and joined her, while Sam hurried around the field to meet Polly Eccles on the other side.

"Oh, dear, oh, dear! I never was so frightened in all my life before!" panted Miss Hamilton. "If you hadn't come to my aid, Bob, that animal would have killed me, I know he would."

"I'd run into the field if there were a dozen bulls there sooner than have you come to harm," said Bob, gallantly.

"Would you, really?" asked the girl, archly. "I would," answered Bob. "I should consider it my duty. In fact, it is every boy's duty to stand up for a girl in distress."

"Well, I'm very grateful to you for saving me, Bob."

"How came you and Polly to be in that field?"

"I knew you and your friend, Sam Summer, were fishing somewhere along the creek and I persuaded Polly to come along with me to try and find you. We took a short-cut across the fields, and we had hardly started to cross that one before the bull dashed through a break in the fence on the other side and flew at us. Polly shouted to me to run for my life, and we both fled, screaming as hard as we could."

"Come over to the creek. I must get my pole and line if a fish hasn't run off with it."

"How many fish have you caught?" asked the girl, as she accompanied him.

"Sam and I only caught one each."

"Is that all? Aren't there many fish in the creek?"

"Lots of them, but they don't bite as well on a sunny day as they do on a cloudy one."

"Let me fish a little while, will you?" asked Stella, eagerly, when Bob found his fishing apparatus just as he had left it.

"It's too late, I guess. It's about time for us to return for supper."

A loud-mouthed bell ringing in the distance proved that Bob was right.

"It's too bad that we didn't come down here earlier," said Stella, regretfully, as she watched Bob roll up his line.

"Maybe Sam and I may come here to-morrow afternoon. If we do we'll bring you with us."

"That will be splendid. You'll let me fish some, won't you?"

"Sure. As long as you want. Come, let us go back."

When they reached the house Bob went to his room and made a complete change in his personal appearance. When he came downstairs he looked like a different boy altogether. His face was washed, his hair neatly brushed, and he had on a good suit of clothes, shoes and stockings.

He ate his supper in the kitchen with Polly, and then went to the barn and harnessed one of the horses to the light wagon.

His mother expected a new boarder from New York, and he had to go to the railroad station, three miles beyond the village, for him and his trunk. He also had to stop at Paisley on his way back and wait for the mail to be sorted so that if there was anything for Sunnyside Cottage he could bring it back with him. The mail-bag was brought to the village by the driver of the carryall which made two daily trips to and from the station. Although a small place, Paisley received a heavy mail. The bulk of the letters, however, were addressed to the Paisley Novelty Co., which advertised extensively in certain publications having a wide circulation, consequently both the morning and afternoon mail-bags carried a large number of registered letters containing various sums of money, as well as letters enclosing postal orders.

Half-way between Paisley and the station was a bridge which crossed a creek.

When Bob came in sight of this bridge he saw, through the gathering dusk, two men kneeling at one end of the structure apparently examining it.

The sound of his wagon wheels reaching their ears, they rose to their feet and sauntered off down the creek a little way and then stood looking into the water.

Bob wondered a little at their actions, for they seemed to be strangers, and as he drove by the spot where they had been crouching he looked intently at the planks to see what it was that had apparently interested them.

He saw nothing out of the way, and came to the conclusion that one of the men might have dropped something between the cracks and the pair was looking for it.

As he passed the end of the bridge his sharp eye discerned a short, stout crowbar lying on the ground.

Its presence there rather puzzled him, and he could not help connecting it with the two strangers.

Before he reached the station the circumstance slipped from his mind, and as the train was not yet in sight he put in the time talking to the driver of the carryall.

It was now dark, and about the only illumination came from the dimly-lighted station.

In a few minutes the train came in.

Several passengers alighted and the mail-bag was thrown to the driver of the carryall, who tossed another bag into the car in return.

The expected boarder for Sunnyside Cottage failed to show up and so Bob found that he had had his ride for nothing.

He was about starting off when the station agent hailed him.

"Say, Rider, what did you come for—a boarder?"

"Yes," answered Bob; "but he didn't come by the train, according to arrangement."

"Want to earn half a dollar and do a lady a favor by going a mile out of your way?"

"Well, I don't object. Where does the lady want to go?"

"To the Brookside Farm. The people there did not come after her."

"All right," answered the boy.

The agent went back in the waiting-room, and presently returned with a stylishly-dressed woman, carrying a handbag.

"This boy will take you over to the Brookside Farm, madam," said the agent.

"Thank you," replied the lady. "It is rather an embarrassing predicament I'm in by the failure of the people to send a conveyance for me."

"I'm sorry that I can't afford you anything better than an open seat, ma'am," said Bob, raising his hat politely.

"I'm thankful to be able to get over to the farm in any way," replied the lady.

Bob then assisted his passenger up on the seat.

"Just give me a lift with the trunk, Rider," said the agent.

Bob helped him land it in the back of the wagon, and, there being nothing more to detain him, he mounted alongside the lady and drove off up the road leading to the village.

Bob found that his passenger was not only a handsome woman, but a very vivacious and entertaining talker.

A turn in the road brought them in sight of a swinging lantern about a quarter of a mile ahead, which Bob knew was suspended from the rear of the carryall.

"Is that a vehicle ahead?" asked the lady.

"Yes. That's the carryall that goes to Paisley. It carries the mail and any passengers bound for the village."

Just at this moment Bob heard the tread of the carryall horse as he stepped upon the bridge over the creek.

The next instant he heard a crash, which was followed by the sudden disappearance of the lantern, shouts and the screams of women.

"My gracious!" exclaimed Bob, touching up his mare. "An accident has happened at the bridge!"

CHAPTER III.—The Lost Mail-Pouch.

When Bob drove up to the scene of the accident he found a group of excited persons, of whom three were women and two children, gathered at the end of the bridge.

He dismounted and joined the crowd.

He saw that the end of one of the stringers had apparently slipped off its bed of rock on the shore, and the corner of the bridge had dropped into the water.

When the timber had fallen down, the carryall had been upset, and the side of the vehicle now rested on the bottom of the shallow stream.

Bob was rather surprised at the manner in which the mishap had occurred.

If one of the stringers had broken, or if the planks had been cut in two by the wheels of the carryall, he would not have wondered, for the bridge was not kept in good repair.

But he could not understand how the end of the

stringer should be dislodged from its resting place, as it fitted into a kind of niche that ought to have held it quite snugly.

The passengers had all been rescued from their wet and uncomfortable positions, and when Bob came up the driver and two men passengers were busy removing the horse from between the shafts.

At length he was released and led over to the other end of the bridge, where he was tied to a tree.

It did not appear that there had been any more serious casualties than a bump on one of the children's heads from contact with a seat, and a sprained ankle which one of the women had sustained.

The driver welcomed the appearance of Bob with satisfaction, as his young, muscular arms would be of great assistance in helping to right the carryall.

"Well, we'd better get busy and right the vehicle," he said. "It does not seem to have been injured any by the fall. That is fortunate, as I have several women and two children to take on to the village. We ought to have no great trouble in getting the carryall on its wheels again and hauling it off the bridge, as there are six of us to do the job."

"Six?" replied Bob. "Where are they? I only see four, including myself."

"Why, there are my two men passengers here, and the two men who were walking along the road at the time we upset. They jumped on the seat after the spill and helped me out of the creek."

"That's so?" replied Bob. "They must have gone on, then, and left you all in the lurch."

"That's a funny thing for them to do," answered the driver, in a tone of annoyance. "They appeared to be very anxious to help me out of the water."

Bob thought their conduct was decidedly odd.

However, there was no doubt but that they had disappeared, and so the driver had to figure on righting the carryall without their aid.

This proved to be no easy job, and took half an hour of the hardest kind of pushing and hauling to accomplish.

At last it was done, and the vehicle was hauled off the bridge.

"Now we'll have to repair the bridge," said Bob.

"Repair the bridge!" replied the driver. "I don't know that that is our business. That job belongs to the county authorities."

"Never mind the county authorities," answered Bob. "I've got to get my team across. I've got a lady passenger bound for the Brookside Farm, and I want to land her at her destination some time to-night."

"Let her get out," said the driver, "and then we'll see if we can't lead your horse and wagon across the bridge as it lies."

"You couldn't get it over without upsetting it. The planks are all displaced at the low end and the mare would fall through. You've got to help me repair the bridge. I helped you right your team, and turn about is fair play."

Neither the driver nor his male passengers cared to undertake the work, much to Bob's disgust and indignation.

The boy kicked vigorously, but it didn't do any good.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said the driver of

the carryall at last. "I'll take your passenger and her trunk out to the Brookside Farm, seeing that she's in a bad fix. That's the very best I can do under the circumstances. It will make me plaguey late in getting to the village, but I suppose it can't be helped."

Bob agreed to this, as it relieved him of the journey, and the half a dollar he had expected to get for the trouble did not cut a great deal of ice with him.

He knew that there was a place a quarter of a mile down the creek where he would be able to cross, but he would have to pass through a small wood to get there.

Bob returned to his lady passenger and explained the predicament he was in.

"The driver of the carryall has consented to go out of his way and take you and your trunk to Brookside Farm, ma'am," he said, "for there doesn't seem to be any other way for you to get there. I'm sorry that I couldn't carry out my contract and take you to your destination, but these men won't fix the bridge, and so I can't get across the creek at this point."

"How will you get across?" she asked, in a tone of some concern, as if she were greatly interested in her young driver's plight.

"There's a ford a short distance further down the creek. I'll have to drive through that wood to reach it, and I'm not sure I can get through."

"That's too bad," she replied, sympathetically. "I am really sorry to lose your company. You're the most interesting boy I think I ever met."

"Thank you, ma'am, for the compliment."

The lady laughed musically.

"Do you live in the village?" she asked.

"No. My mother owns the Rider Farm, known to summer folks as the Sunnyside Cottage. It's about a mile beyond Paisley."

"Really, I'm sorry now that I'm not going there," said the lady. "Still, I might make a change in my arrangements right now. Do you think your mother could accommodate me?"

"Oh, yes. We've only got four boarders at present."

"It would serve the Brookside Farm people right to lose me because they failed to meet me at the station. I suppose the carryall would take me as far as the village. Then you could meet me there after you succeeded in getting across the creek."

"I'll do that, ma'am. You can stay at the post-office till I get there, which will probably be in half an hour. The driver will like that much better, for he isn't stuck on going out to the Brookside Farm after the delay he's had here. I'll speak to him about the matter, if you wish me to."

"Do so, if you please," said the lady, apparently delighted with the change she had made in her arrangements.

The women and children had been carried safely over the creek by this time and were seated in the carryall once more.

The horse was hitched in the shafts and all seemed in readiness to proceed.

The driver, however, with his remaining lantern, the rear one having been smashed, and his two male passengers, seemed to be busily hunting for something in the water near the center of the

bridge when Bob started to cross the shaky and inclined structure.

"What have you lost?" asked the boy, curiously, of the driver, who was poking about in the bed of the creek with a stick.

"The mail-bag is gone," he replied, in worried tones.

"The mail-bag!" cried Bob.

"Yes; it must have slipped out of the front of the wagon when she upset."

"Where did you carry it? Under the front seat?" asked Bob.

"Yes."

"I shouldn't think it would slip out, unless the wagon turned completely over, which it didn't. The front of the carryall lay higher than the rear, anyway. Are you sure that it didn't slide back into the body of the vehicle?"

"I hunted the wagon all over for it," replied the driver, anxiously. "It got out some way."

"You think it fell into the water, then?"

"There's was no other place for it to go."

"Maybe it was carried down the stream a little way?" suggested Bob.

"The funny thing about this matter," spoke up one of the male passengers, "is that all the other bundles, the express matter and such, he had under the seat, are still there. Seems to me that some of them ought to have gone into the creek instead of the mail-pouch, which is a clumsy thing to slide about."

To continue the search in the darkness with one lantern seemed a forlorn task.

He suggested as much to the driver, advising him to give up the hunt till daylight.

The two male passengers, who were wet and chilly, and anxious to proceed on their way, backed up Bob.

"I'm afraid there's a pile of money orders and bills in that bag," said the driver, gloomily. "What's to become of me if it's lost?"

"Well, you stand very little show of finding it in the darkness. Take us to the village, and then, if you're afraid to wait till morning, you can get some men to come back with you with several lanterns and you can make a systematic search."

The driver reluctantly concluded to abandon the hunt for the time being, and came out of the water.

"I've got to lose half an hour at least going out to the Brookside Farm," he grumbled.

"You don't have to do that now," said Bob. "The lady has decided to go to our place. All you have to do will be to take her to the post-office. I'll pick her up there later on, when I get across at the ford below."

"I'm glad of that," replied the driver, brightening up. "You'll take her trunk on with you?"

"Yes. I'd take her with me, too, only I'm not sure I can get through the wood. I may have to come back and go three or four miles around to reach the ford."

Bob's passenger, whose name was Mrs. Canfield, was carefully assisted across the demoralized bridge and helped to a place in the carryall.

The driver then mounted his seat and, with a very glum look, started the wagon on its way toward Paisley, while Bob recrossed the bridge, got into his vehicle and turned the mare's head toward the wood.

CHAPTER IV.—What Bob Discovered in the Wood.

It was no fool job, as Bob well knew, to guide his wagon through the wood without continually running afoul of the trees.

As soon as he got under the shadow of the trees he found the gloom intense, and proceeded slowly and with great caution.

He collided with a tree several times, but easily worked the wagon free, and had reached the middle of the wood when he suddenly saw a faint light ahead.

"I wonder where that comes from?" Bob asked himself. "I didn't know there was a house here."

As he drew nearer the light his troubles seemed to increase, and finally he found that, turn which way he would, he was practically blocked.

"I'll have to turn around and go back," he said.

When he tried to do that he found he had driven into a kind of cul-de-sac, and could not turn around.

"The only way to get out of this muddle is to back the wagon," he muttered.

To back the wagon successfully in the dark was a feat that got the best of him.

"I'll have to give it up and go to that house where the light is. I shall probably find a man there, and maybe a lantern. I'll ask him to help me out."

So Bob left the mare standing in her tracks and started for the house.

It stood in the midst of a clearing a hundred yards away.

It was little better than a shanty, a story and a half high.

As the thought of tramps occurred to Bob's mind it struck him that he had better go slow.

"I'll look in the window first before knocking. There might be a tramp or two inside, and finding I was alone in this out-of-the-way place they might knock me out and steal off with my rig. It's always well to be prudent."

With that conviction Bob moved away from the door and walked to the window through which the light shone.

It was just the right height from the ground to enable him to look through with ease.

One of the bottom panes was missing, while the others were cracked and dirty.

Bob put his face up to the opening and looked inside.

What he saw rather staggered him.

On a plain deal table in the middle of the room was a big pile of letters, while on the floor close by lay a leather mail-pouch with a great, gaping slit in its side.

Two men, resembling in general appearance the pair Bob had seen kneeling at the end of the bridge when he was on his way to the railroad station, were opening the envelopes and dumping their contents on a clear spot on the table.

Already a considerable amount in loose silver and bills was in evidence.

Bob gave a gasp.

"These chaps got away with the missing mail-bag from the carryall," he breathed. "There isn't the least doubt about that fact, for there is the pouch on the floor and its contents is on the table. I begin to see through the whole scheme.

Those chaps must have learned that the Paisley Novelty Co. receive a heavy mail every afternoon, and they determined to get possession of the mail-bag and rifle it of the money it contained. Finding out that the driver of the carryall carried the bag from the station to the village they decided to upset the wagon on its way back. The bridge across the creek seemed to be a good point at which to effect their purpose. They saw it was a rickety affair and so they dislodged the stringer in such a way that it would go down as soon as the weight of the vehicle came upon it. As soon as the accident happened as they had planned it they rushed up, and while one made a bluff of helping the driver out of the creek, no doubt leading him away from the front of the wagon, the other fellow grabbed the mail-bag and made off with it under cover of the darkness. Yes, it's as plain as daylight. Then they came together and walked into this wood to divide their plunder. Probably they knew of the existence of this shanty. No doubt they've been staying here while making their arrangements to work the robbery. Well, if they haven't a nerve to rob the United States mail! That's a pretty serious offence. Now that I'm on to the game, it's up to me to put a spoke in their wheel if I can. The question is, how am I going to do it? There are two of them, both stout fellows, and probably armed. It would be likely to go hard with me if I made a rash move. It's a mighty good thing that I thought twice before knocking at that door."

Bob watched them go through the registered mail.

When they finished with that, one of them began to count the money.

"Five hundred and ten dollars and fifteen cents," he said. "Not so bad, Bill."

"You kin bet not. I didn't expect we'd get so much," replied Bill.

"I dare say these other letters contain twice that much in money orders," replied his companion. "Too bad they're useless to us."

"We'd better open all the letters addressed to the Novelty Company. Some people are foolish to send money at their own risk to save a few cents in Government fees."

The other nodded, and they started in on the rest of the letters, talking together as they proceeded.

They found a \$2 bill and some silver pieces, together with about twenty money orders in the other letters.

"These other letters addressed to outside people aren't worth bothering with, I guess," said the man, whom Bill called Dick.

"I guess you're right," said Bill, picking up the pouch. "Shove all that stuff back into the bag and we'll drop it into the creek in the mornin'."

Dick pushed the empty envelopes, letters of instructions, money orders, and the unopened missives into the bag, and Bill tossed it into a corner of the room.

"Five hundred and twelve dollars and eighty cents divided in two makes \$256.40 apiece," said Dick.

He counted out that sum and pushed it toward his companion.

The remainder he put in his own pocket.

"This was the easiest job we ever done," he said, with a laugh. "That bridge must have been

built on purpose for us. It was such a simple matter to work that stringer out of its socket with a hand-crowbar. Then the carryall rolled right into the trap, dumped the driver and the passengers into shallow water, and upset the horse. The rest was easy to two such experienced chaps like us. Everybody was excited, and even the driver had no thoughts for the mail-pouch at that moment, so you had no difficulty in walking off with it in the darkness."

"Yes, it was dead easy," grinned Bill. "Just like finding money."

"We'll take a drink and turn in now. We want to get away on an early train."

Each produced a pocket-flask which contained a liquor resembling whiskey.

They finished what was in the flasks and chucked them after the mail-pouch.

Then, after arranging an old mattress that lay in another corner, they blew out the candle and went to rest.

"They're going to stay here all night," evidently. "The only thing I see that I can do is to try and get back to the village as soon as I can and send the constables over here to capture them."

He turned to his wagon and tried his luck again at backing the rig out of the predicament into which he had run it.

He succeeded in backing it far enough to find an opening in the trees sufficiently wide to get through.

This time he did not attempt to drive the mare, but led her in and out through the wood till he got out altogether close to the ford.

Then he got up on the seat and drove across the creek and thence on toward the village.

The Paisley Novelty Company's manufactory was on the outskirts of the village in that direction, and Bob found that he would pass close to it.

There was a light burning in the office, so he stopped in front of the door and pounded on it.

A window was presently opened and the watchman's head appeared.

"Who's there?" he asked.

"Bob Rider."

"What do you want?"

"Have you telephone connection with the home of any of the officers?"

"There's a direct wire to the president's house. Why do you ask?"

"Could I call him up? I've got a matter of great importance to communicate to him."

"Why don't you drive on to his house?"

"Don't know where he lives."

"You know where Maple Street is, don't you?"

"Yes."

"You go up Maple Street as far as Lincoln Green. It's the second house from the corner facing the Green."

"That's some distance out of my way. It would be much easier to telephone. Call up his house and see if he's in."

"Where do you live?"

"On the Rider Farm, also known as Sunnyside Cottage, one mile outside the village. My mother owns the place."

"All right. I'll let you in."

Two minutes later Bob had the president of the company on the wire.

After explaining who he was, the boy told the

president how the carryall had been upset by the dropping of one end of the creek bridge that evening.

Bob then went on to tell how the mail-pouch had been discovered to be missing when the driver was ready to continue on to the village.

"Is that so?" replied the president, in a tone that showed he had suddenly become deeply interested in the conversation. "Hasn't it been recovered?"

"No, sir; but I have found out where it is," answered Bob.

"Where is it?"

"In an old shanty in the wood across the creek."

"Why, how came it to get there?"

"It was stolen by two men, who were the cause of the bridge breaking down."

"How do you know all this?" asked the president.

Bob explained about his trip through the wood to get to the ford; how he had seen a light in the shanty and looked through a window on the ground floor to see who was in the building; how he had seen the rifled mail-pouch and a pile of letters on the table which the men were cutting open and pulling out their contents; how they had finally divided the proceeds of the robbery, which amounted to a little over \$500, and had then turned in on the mattress for the night.

"If you send the constable over to that house with two or three men at his back he ought to have no difficulty in catching the rascals. They have the money in their pockets. The money orders are all in the cut mail-pouch, with the rest of the mail matter. The constable ought to be able to save everything."

The president thanked Bob for his information, and assured him that the company would not overlook his services.

"I'll make arrangements at once for the capture of the two robbers," he concluded. "You will hear from me later. Good-night."

Bob hung up the receiver and started for the post-office, where he found Mrs. Canfield impatiently waiting for him to appear.

The postmaster was in a sweat over the missing mail-pouch.

"Did the driver go back to look for it in the creek?" asked Bob.

"He did, and took several men to help him."

"They'll have their trouble for nothing, because the bag isn't in the creek."

"How do you know it isn't?" asked the postmaster, eying Bob curiously.

"Because I happen to know where it is."

"Where is it?"

"I've told the president of the Novelty Company where it is and he's going to see that it's recovered at once."

"What has Mr. Golding got to do with the mail-pouch? I am the postmaster and I request that you'll tell me so that I can send for it."

"Owing to the circumstances surrounding the case, it's better that Mr. Golding should act in the matter. He's more interested than anyone else, because there's over \$500 in cash in the registered letters and probably more than that in money orders."

"How do you know that there's more than \$500 in the registered letters?" asked the postmaster, sharply. "Nobody but the sender and receiver is

supposed to know the contents of a registered letter."

"Because the man who opened the letters said there was something more than \$500 in them in cash."

At those words the postmaster nearly had a fit.

"Do you mean to say that the missing mail-pouch has been tampered with?"

"I do. The bag was not lost by the upsetting of the carryall at the bridge, but was stolen by two men who caused the accident to get possession of it."

The postmaster nearly jumped a foot.

"How came you to know that the bag was stolen, Rider?"

"Oh, I haven't time now to tell you all I know about the matter, because I've got to take Mrs. Canfield over to the farm, but you'll learn in good time."

At that moment Mr. Golding and the constable of the village entered the post-office together.

"Here is Bob Roper now, Mr. Golding," said the constable.

"Glad to make your acquaintance, Rider," said the president of the Novelty Company. "I've started in to act on the information you furnished me over the telephone in relation to the robbery of the mail-pouch."

"Glad to hear it, sir. I don't think there is anything more that I can tell you. You know about as much as I do on the subject now."

"Well, you sha'n't lose anything by your fortunate discovery, my boy. Mr. Jones," turning to the postmaster, "lock up your store and come with us. We are going to recover the stolen mail-bag, and it's your duty as the postmaster to take charge of it as soon as you can get your hands on it."

"Come, Mrs. Canfield," said Bob. "We'll go on to the farm now. You've had quite a time of it to-night trying to reach your destination."

On the way to the farm he told the story of his night's experience to his fair passenger, and she was greatly astonished by his story.

Mrs. Rider, who was wondering greatly over her son's lengthy absence, was also surprised to see a lady instead of the gentleman boarder she expected.

She welcomed Mrs. Canfield, however, and provided her with a cup of tea and some cold meat and bread.

And while the new boarder was eating and explaining how she came to change her destination from the Brookside Farm to the Sunnyside Cottage, Bob went to bed.

CHAPTER V.—Bob Outlines the Principal Situation in His Play.

Next morning one of the constable's deputies rode out to the Rider Farm to tell Bob that he must appear at Justice Harlow's office at ten o'clock and give his testimony against the two mail-pouch robbers who had been captured the night before through the information furnished by him to the president of the Paisley Novelty Co.

"All right," said Bob. "Wait till I change my clothes, and I'll go with you."

The news of the mail robbery and the capture of the rascals was soon circulated through the

village, consequently Lawyer Harlow's office was crowded with inquisitive people, who overflowed on the sidewalk outside when no more could find entrance at the hour set for the examination of the prisoners.

The damaged mail-pouch, the rifled envelopes and their contents, including the money taken from the pockets of the prisoners at the time of their arrest, were displayed on the justice's desk as exhibits in the case.

After the driver of the carryall had described the accident which had happened to his vehicle, and had identified one of the prisoners as the man who had assisted him out of the creek, Bob took the witness chair and told his story as the reader knows it.

The prisoners listened to his story in great surprise, and when he had concluded they cast very black looks at him, for his evidence, backed up by the exhibits, was strong enough to convict them in court.

The justice, of course, remanded the prisoners to the county jail for detention, until they were taken charge of by the United States authorities, whose business it was to proceed against them in a Federal court.

Bob was complimented by Justice Harlow, and afterward by many of the villagers, for the part he had taken in the matter.

Subsequently Mr. Golding, in behalf of the Novelty Company, presented him with a reward of 250, as an evidence of their appreciation of his services.

In due time Bob was summoned by the Government to appear in court as the star witness against the two mail robbers, and they were easily convicted on his testimony.

Shortly after they had been sent to the penitentiary Bob received a reward of \$500 from the Postoffice Department and a complimentary letter with the autograph of the postmaster-general attached.

To resume the thread of our story, Bob returned to the farm after the examination of the mail robbers in Justice Harlow's office, and took up his regular duties where he had left off.

His work was not very laborious, as he did not go in the fields.

He looked after the truck patch, which supplied the boarders with fresh vegetables, attended to matters around the yard and the various outbuildings, and did the chores about the house, sometimes helping Polly when the house was full of boarders and the girl was overworked.

He also took the visitors carriage driving at times, and carried them and their baggage to and from the railroad station.

In spite of the many duties he had to perform he could always find time to amuse himself when he felt so disposed, for his mother was not exacting in her demands on his services.

He and Stella Hamilton had got upon quite a friendly footing, and this feeling was intensified on her part by Bob's conduct the previous afternoon in saving her from the vicious attentions of the bull.

Both she and her mother felt very grateful to him, and showed it by admitting him to a more intimate relationship.

"Well, are you going to take me fishing with

you this afternoon?" asked Stella, when she met him in the yard about four o'clock.

"Sure thing. I expect Sam over about five, and then the three of us will go to the creek," he replied.

"That will be fun," she answered, with sparkling eyes. "By the way, do you know that lady, Mrs. Canfield, you brought here last night is an actress?"

"No," replied Bob, opening his eyes. "Is she?"

"Yes. I guess she's a good one, too, for she said she was out last season with one of Broughman's companies."

"We had a fine actor here last summer named William Richmond. You might ask her if she knows him."

"I will. Now, don't forget to let me know when you and Sam Sumner are ready to go to the creek. You'll find me on the front veranda."

"All right," said Bob, and then Stella walked away.

Sam turned up at a quarter to five.

When they appeared in the front of the house with their fishing tackle, Stella was talking to Mrs. Canfield.

When the actress found that her companion was going fishing with the boys she wanted to go along.

"The more the merrier," laughed Bob. "Go and get your hats."

When the party reached the fishing ground, Bob baited his hooks and handed the pole to Stella.

Sam did the same for Mrs. Canfield.

"When are you going to show me that play you wrote?" asked Sam, after they had been at the creek for perhaps a quarter of an hour.

Mrs. Canfield turned around and looked at Bob with some curiosity.

"Have you written a play?" she inquired.

"Yes, ma'am," replied the boy, modestly.

"What kind of play is it? You must let me see it. I am connected with the profession, and will be able to pass upon its merits."

"It's a melodrama in four acts, ma'am, and is called, 'The Red Light.'"

"'The Red Light'?"

"Yes. You see, the principal scene is a lighthouse off the coast. It has revolving red and white lights. When the lighthouse people need urgent help from the shore they stop the light so that it throws the red beams toward the village. That signal is well known to all the fishermen and villagers. Well, ma'am, in the third act, which is the main act of the play, the villain entices the heroine to the lighthouse by means of a decoy note, supposed to be written by the hero, with whom she's in love, and who is keeper of the lighthouse. She gets one of the village boatmen to take her out in his boat. The villain, in the meantime, with the help of the second villain, has overpowered the hero and his assistant and locked them up in the oil-room of the lighthouse. So, when the heroine appears he tells her that she is in his power and must consent to marry him. She refuses, of course. He then tells her that her lover and his assistant are locked in the oil-room. He shows her where he has staved in a cask of the oil, a portion of which is seen in a pool around the door. He threatens to set fire to the oil, which will then communicate with the rest of the barrels in the room, and thus bring about the

death of the imprisoned man, if she does not marry him." In the struggle which takes place between them she knocks the lantern out of his hand, extinguishing the light, and rushes up the steps to the room under the lantern, where the revolving machinery is. Here she stops the light so that it throws a steady gleam shoreward, the signal of distress. That gives the title to the drama, for help comes in the shape of the comedian and the soubrette, who smash in the door of the oil-room, letting the hero and his man out of their dangerous situation. In the meantime, the villain has chased the heroine to the top of the lighthouse. She runs out on the gallery, where he traps her. To escape from him she climbs out on the iron projecting arm to which the fog-bell is suspended. He follows her out and she slides down the bell-rope as far as she can go. Then he pulls out a knife and tells her he will cut the rope and send her into the sea to her death unless she consents to marry him. She refuses to yield, and as he is about to cut the rope the hero appears and saves her. That's the end of the act."

The actress, Stella, and Sam listened with great interest to Bob's description of the chief scene of his play.

"It's a very good situation," admitted Mrs. Canfield. "I must read the whole play, in order to judge if the rest of it is as good in proportion. If it needs improvement, and I can help you in any way, I'll be glad to do so."

"Thank you, ma'am. I've no doubt you will be able to point out the defects which I will then be able to rectify."

"What do you intend to do with your play, Bob?" asked Sam, interestedly.

"I intend to sell it to some manager, if I can."

"And if it makes a hit you expect to get famous?"

"I don't expect to get famous through that play. That is my first attempt—the opening wedge. If I can get it produced, and it attracts enough attention, it will get my name before the public. Then I'll write another play, and try to do much better. If that goes, too, I'll keep on writing, and maybe some day I'll write a play that will make me famous, see?"

"I see," replied Sam. "Look out there, Miss Hamilton, you've got a bite."

Stella pulled up her line and saw a fine fish dancing at the end of it. As she started to pull the line in the fish managed to free its gills from the hook, fell back into the water and disappeared.

"Isn't that too provoking for anything?" she pouted.

"Better luck next time," laughed Bob, as he rebaited the hook.

"Oh, dear, I don't believe I'll catch another one," she said, doubtfully.

"Why not. There are lots of others in the creek."

"That fish may warn the others against my bait," she replied demurely.

"That's right," nodded Sam, with a grin. "It happened to me once."

"Did it, really?" asked the girl. Do tell me about it."

"I was fishing one day in another creek, and pulling 'em out as fast as I dropped the bait into the water. After I'd caught about twenty, one got away from me, just like yours did."

"Well," said Stella, with an interested look, "what then?"

"I didn't get another bite after that."

"You didn't?"

"No. The worst of it was I knew the fish were on to me."

"How did you?"

"The water was as clear as crystal, and before I lost that fish I could see them rush in a drove for the bait as soon as I cast it in. They had a regular scrap among themselves to see which one would get it."

"It must have been fun," said Stella.

"It was—for me. Well, when that fish got away from my hook and dropped back into the water all the fish gathered in a circle about him. In about a minute not a fish was in sight. He had warned them against the bait and they skipped out."

"That's a pretty good fish story, Sam," said Bob. "But I would advise you not to tell it too often."

At that moment Stella uttered a little scream of delight and pulled up her line with as fine a fish as before, which she succeeded in landing safely.

"There, I did catch another, after all," she said, in a tone of satisfaction.

"I'm afraid your yarn doesn't count for much, Sam," laughed Bob.

"Oh, I don't know. I guess the fish that escaped was too stupid to give the snap away," he said.

After catching a dozen fish the party returned to the house.

CHAPTER VI.—Bob Starts For New York To See About His Play.

After supper that evening Bob brought the manuscript of his play from his room and handed it to Mrs. Canfield.

"Thank you," she said, with a smile. "I will read it to-morrow morning."

She kept her word, and when she saw Bob after dinner next day she told him that his drama was very good, indeed, especially for a first attempt.

"Indeed," she said, "it was a surprise to me. I've seen many a play performed that was far worse, and the work, too, of an experienced writer. I can't understand how you, a country boy, could put your ideas together in such a practical way. Really, you have gone to work about it as if you were perfectly familiar with theatrical methods and the theatre itself. Where did you get your knowledge from?"

Bob explained that he had got his information from Mr. Richmond.

"Ah, indeed? I know Mr. Richmond. He is a good actor. So he was boarding here last summer?"

"Yes, ma'am. I went around with him a good deal, and he seemed to take considerable interest in me, particularly after I told him I meant to write a play."

He told the actress how Mr. Richmond had drafted a Wild West drama for him as a guide, and shown him how the play should be put together so that it would be adapted to presentation on the stage.

"I wrote the dialogue and the completed drama is in my trunk. But, of course, I can't do anything with it, because the ideas and situations

are not mine. In fact, Mr. Richmond said that the scheme was merely a rehash of a play that had been before the public. He laid it out for me in order to show me how a modern play is built."

"I see," said Mrs. Canfield. "You have evidently profited well by his instructions. Well, come up to my room and we'll go over your play, scene by scene, and I'll point out where, in my opinion, it can be improved, and how."

Bob and the actress spent the afternoon together improving the drama, and he took it away with him to rewrite at his leisure such parts of it as required alteration and improvement. During the month that followed, Bob submitted each act, as he finished it, to the inspection of the actress, and more alterations were made in the manuscript. Finally the play received her complete approval, and then Bob rewrote it carefully from beginning to end, and sent it by express to a dramatic agent named Augustus Thacker, who had an office in Union Square, New York. Mrs. Canfield knew Mr. Thacker, and wrote a note to him requesting him to give the play his consideration and try to dispose of it to the author's advantage.

In about a week Bob received a letter bearing the imprint of "Augustus Thacker, Dramatic Agent, No. — Union Square, New York," and his heart gave a bound when he looked at it.

He hastily tore the envelope open and read the contents, which were brief. Mr. Thacker acknowledged receipt of the melodrama. "The Red Light," and would give it his prompt attention. Bob showed the letter to Mrs. Canfield, and she told him that Mr. Thacker had said all that was necessary, and that he must wait until he heard from the agent. It was about this time that Bob was summoned as a witness against the mail-bag robbers, and it took him away from home a couple of days. When he got back he was just in time to bid Stella Hamilton and her mother good-by. They were going to spend the month of August at the seashore.

"I suppose you'll go down to New York in the near future about your play," said the girl. "When you do you must call and see us. We shall be delighted to see you."

"I shall not fail to call on you if I go to New York," said Bob. "Perhaps you wouldn't object to me writing to you occasionally in the meanwhile."

"I should be glad to have you do so," she replied. "You can address me at the Surf House, Long Branch, until the first week in September; after that a letter will reach me at my home, the address of which I have already given you."

Two weeks after the departure of the Hamiltons, Bob received the \$500 check from the Post-office Department, which he deposited for collection with the Paisley Bank. That made him worth \$750, in his own right, and he began to feel quite independent. About the middle of August Mrs. Canfield left Sunnyside Cottage to attend the rehearsals in New York of the new play in which she was engaged to appear during the coming season. Bob was sorry she had to go, as he found her very interesting and lively, and had made himself particularly attentive to her after Stella went away. Mrs. Canfield left quite a pile of theatrical papers behind her, and

Bob took the bunch to his own room to look them over. One advertisement that attracted his attention read as follows:

PLAY FOR SALE—A farce comedy. With 15,000 sheets of special paper. Short cast. Booked solid in best one-night stands. Will sacrifice for less than paper costs. Address, John Thomas, Box 162, Wichita, Kansas.

"I wonder why John Thomas wants to sacrifice his play at less than the cost of the printing when he's got his time filled?" Bob asked himself. "Maybe it's been a failure at the start, or his cash has given out. If I were in his place I'd try to get an 'angel,' as Mrs. Canfield calls the moneyed man who backs a show."

Bob waited patiently to hear from Mr. Augustus Thacker about his play, but the whole of September passed away without any word from him. The agent had now had the drama in his possession eight weeks, and Bob thought it was about time something was doing, so he wrote the agent a polite letter of inquiry on the subject. After waiting a week for a reply, and not getting one, Bob surprised his mother one morning by telling her that he was going to New York next day to look after his drama.

That afternoon he drew \$50 from the bank to pay his expenses, and when he got home he packed his suit-case with what he thought he would require for a short stay. When he left for the station next morning to catch the 8:10 train, he told his mother that he would be back by Saturday, but circumstances ruled otherwise, and many Saturdays passed before he saw the farm again.

CHAPTER VII.—Bob Visits Augustus Thacker's Office.

Bob made his entree into New York via the Weehawken Ferry, which landed him at the foot of West Forty-second Street. It was about half-past eleven, and he felt hungry, for he had eaten his breakfast at six o'clock.

He asked the ticket agent what car he should take to reach Union Square.

"Take a cross-town car to Broadway, and transfer for a car going downtown. Tell the conductor to let you off at the Square."

Bob thanked him and got aboard a Forty-second Street car. The conductor let him out at the corner of Broadway. He asked a policeman to direct him to a nearby restaurant and was told there was one down the block.

He found it without any trouble and had a good dinner, after which he hailed a Broadway car and was carried down to Union Square.

He had the letter in his pocket with the agent's name and address, and he looked about for the number. A policeman told him that it was on the east side of the Square, near Fourteenth Street, and he crossed over. When he reached the building he saw a sign over two windows on the third floor, which read: "Augustus Thacker, Theatrical Agent."

He entered, walked up two flights of narrow stairs, and standing on the landing, looked for Mr. Thacker's office. Ahead of him to the right were two doors with glass upper sections.

One bore Mr. Thacker's name and business, the other was marked simply "Private."

Bob pushed open the first door and entered the office. He found himself in a fair-sized room furnished with half-a-dozen chairs, a desk, at which a small boy sat, a table on which were spread several dramatic and sporting papers, while the walls were well covered with pictures of theatrical celebrities, sandwiched in between theatrical lithographs and half-sheet hangers.

The boy, who was red-headed and pock-marked, looked up in a lazy way as Bob closed the door.

He made no effort to ascertain the visitor's business until Bob walked over to him and inquired if Mr. Thacker was in.

"He's in, all right, but is engaged. Are you an actor?"

"No," replied Bob. "I'm an author."

The boy looked at him curiously and not without some interest.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"Robert Rider."

"You ought to join a circus," said the boy, with a broad grin.

"Why?"

"Because you're a Rider. See the joke?" chuckled the office boy.

"Say, are you often taken this way?" asked Bob, rather nettled at the boy's witicism.

"Taken what way?"

"Trying to be funny. What's your name?"

"Mike Feeney."

"What are you—the office boy?"

"I'm the whole thing when the boss is out."

"I should imagine you were. You don't seem to be very busy."

"Yes, I'm busy readin'."

"What do you do to earn your wages?"

"Warm this chair most of the time," grinned Feeney. "When any of the profesh come in lookin' for an engagement I take their names to the boss, if he's in."

"Then take mine in."

"I will, when the tart manager that's chewing his ear off comes out."

"Why do you call him a tart manager?"

"Oh, because he is. The woods are full of them. They made a great bluff about takin' a show out, and in about a week the people are countin' the ties on their way back to the Rialto."

This was information for Bob. He glanced around upon the photographs tacked on the wall.

Among others he noticed the picture of Mrs. Canfield. Written across the bottom of it in a female hand were the words: "Yours truly, Kittle Bertrand."

"That looks like Mrs. Canfield's picture," said Bob.

"That's her."

"What does 'Your truly, Kittle Bertrand,' mean, then?"

"That's her professional cognomen."

"She's a good actress," said Bob.

"Yep. There's worse."

"She was out with one of the Brougham companies last season, and is going out again this season."

"Who says she was out with Brougham?" asked Feeney, evidently astonished.

"She told me so herself."

"Oh, if she told you so I ain't got nothing to say. Where did you meet her?"

"She boarded at our farm most of the summer."

"What, are you from a farm?" asked the boy, in surprise.

"I am."

"So Miss Bertrand was boardin' at your farm. I knew she was somewhere up the country."

"She left about three weeks ago to begin rehearsing with Brougham."

"She told you that, eh?" chuckled the youth.

"Yes. Why shouldn't she, if it's so?"

"That's right. What she says always goes with me."

"Has she gone out yet?"

"Nope. She was in here this mornin'."

"Then I guess I'll call and see her, if I can find out where she lives."

"I'll give you her address," and Feeney scribbled something on a piece of paper and handed it to Bob. He read: "Miss Bertrand, No. — West Thirty-ninth Street."

Just then the outer door opened and admitted a tall, square, seedy-looking, smoothly-shaven man, with long hair that fell over his frayed collar. He sported a plug hat, and yellowish-tinged spats over his cracked patent leather shoes. His shiny Prince Albert coat was tightly buttoned, and his right hand was thrust through it at the chest. He strode toward the office boy with a tragic air.

"Gadzooks, Michael, 'tis a balmy day," he said in a deep-toned voice. "Is Thacker to be seen? Perchance he has secured something for me."

"Nothin' doin', Ranter," said Feeney, with a yawn.

"Wilt thou take my name inside, Michael?"

"The boss is busy and this gent comes next."

Mr. Ranter, who was an actor beyond any doubt, eyed Bob with some interest.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, extending his hand with a show of enthusiasm. "A brother professional, I perceive. I know thy face not, but I welcome thee just the same."

"Cut it out, Ranter," interposed Feeney. "He isn't an actor. He's an author."

"It is all the same. The immortal Shakespeare was both an author and an actor. Thy name, friend?"

"Robert Rider."

"And mine is McKean Ranter. You have heard of me, of course. I once supported Charlotte Cushman."

"And now you have a hard job to support yourself," chuckled the irrepressible Feeney.

"May I have a word with you, Rider? Come hither; this corner is suitable for confidential communications."

"Look out, Rider; he's goin' to touch you for a nickel," warned Feeney, who knew the actor's methods.

Mr. Ranter was in no way rebuffed by the office boy's exclamation. He held on to Bob's arm, like a drowning man to a plank, and said, in a stage whisper:

"Prythee, hast thou got a stray quarter in thy jeans? I am in sore need of a square meal. I have tasted neither bite nor sup these twelve hours, and I fain would break my fast."

Bob felt sorry for him, and, fishing a twenty-five cent piece out of his pocket, handed it to the

man who in his early days had supported Mrs. Cushman, according to his own statement.

The actor's fingers grasped the silver coin with a pitiful kind of avidity.

"I thank thee, friend," he said, huskily. "Some day when prosperity showers on me her refulgent beams once more, I will return this small contribution with interest. Till then, friend, I will say farewell. Perchance we shall meet again."

With those words, Mr. Ranter faded through the door as fast as his long legs could carry him, and he made a beeline for a saloon in the neighborhood where they set out a big free lunch.

CHAPTER VIII.—The Duplicity of a Theatrical Agent.

Hardly had the corridor door closed behind the actor when the door of the private room opened and Augustus Thacker appeared in the opening. He cast a sharp glance at Bob and then addressed Feeney.

"Take this note up to the St. James Building, Mike," he said. "Want to see me?" he added, turning to Bob.

"Are you Mr. Thacker?"

"That's my name."

"Then I called to see you."

"Take a seat. I'll be at liberty in a few minutes."

He returned to his desk in the inner room as Feeney, after a friendly wink at Bob, left the office on his errand. The boy amused himself for a few minutes looking at the photos on the walls and reading the bills, then he took a seat near the door of the private room. It happened that Mr. Thacker had inadvertently left it ajar about an inch, and the conversation going on between the theatrical agent and his caller floated out quite plainly to Bob's ear.

"You say this young fellow you've got on a string has got plenty of coin and is stuck on backing a good show?" said the voice of Augustus Thacker.

"Yes. He's the easiest mark I've picked up yet. He told me that his grandmother left him \$20,000. His ambition is to become a manager and I've promised to teach him the business," chuckled the man, whose name was Martin Grimmer.

"I envy you your luck," replied the agent. "Why didn't you bring him along and let me have a peep at him?"

"I don't care about exhibiting him around among the fraternity," answered Grimmer, dryly. "Something might happen to him. I consider it my duty to protect him since I have won his confidence."

"You say you are looking for a strong play—one with plenty of good situations in it and broad comedy. Something, in fact, that will take in the provinces. Well, I guess I've got the very thing you want."

"Have you? What is it?"

"It's a melodrama in four acts."

"What's the title?"

"The Red Light."

Bob's heart gave a great bound.

"The name isn't so bad. It'll take special scenery, I s'pose?"

"Yes. There's a lighthouse scene in the third act, interior view, which sinks so as to show the heroine mounting the circular stairs to the lantern."

"Something after the castle scene in 'Arrah-na-Pogue,' eh?"

"On that plan. The girl stops the machinery which revolves the red and white lights in the lantern in order to throw the red light shoreward, which is a signal for help. The villain follows her up to thwart her, but she breaks the connections so he can't undo her work. Then he chases her out down the rope of the fog-bell. As the villain is about to cut the rope——"

"The hero appears and rescues her, I s'pose?"

"Exactly. It's a corking good climax, and the principal one of the play."

"I'll admit that it isn't half bad. What other striking situations are there?"

"A murder in the first act, followed by the arrest of the hero, who is wrongfully accused of the crime."

"Of course," chuckled Grimmer. "The hero always is. What kind of a villain? A swell rascal, who wants to wed the heroine 'cause he's discovered she's heiress to a big property? Wears a high dicer, and smokes cigarettes in a debonair fashion?"

"Nothing of the sort. That's done to death in all the cheap melodramas that are floating about the country. The villain is a hardened, middle-aged skipper of a fishing schooner. He's stuck on the girl, whom he's known ever since she was knee-high to a marlin-spike. The hero is a college graduate who's got into a scrape, nothing that reflects on his manly qualities, but his wealthy father gets a mistaken idea of it and bounces his son out of the house in a fit of passion. The young fellow applies for and secures, through a pull, of course, the position of keeper of the lighthouse off the village where the girl lives. He gets acquainted with her, they fall in love, and that furnishes the ground work for the trouble that follows."

"What's the climax of the second act?"

"A thrilling escape from the lock-up by the hero."

"How about the comedy? I hope there's plenty of horse-play, for that's what the out-of-town people want."

"There's two good comedy parts—a young fisherman and a travelin' fakir—both in love with the soubrette, who's a giddy thing that doesn't know her own mind. The scenes between them are very funny. A corking good soubrette would be able to put plenty of snap and ginger into the play."

"That's what I want. The play rather strikes me. Who's the author?"

"He's an unknown quantity. New at the business, but he's got the stuff in him that'll find its level one of these days. You can gamble on it he's a corker."

"How did you get hold of him?"

"I haven't met him yet. He lives on a farm somewhere up-State. He sent the manuscript to me by post, with a recommendation from Kittie Bertrand, who boarded this summer at his mother's place. She helped fix up the raw parts, but that was all. By the way, I may as well say right here if you take the play you'll have

to take Kittie with it. She's dead set on playing the heroine, and I've promised to consider her wishes in placing it. But you won't lose anything by engaging her, as she's a good one"

"Fifty bones and expenses."

"Say do you take me for a National Bank? I'll give her twenty, money sure, and she to pay her own."

"Oh, if you're going to work the hamfat business we won't say anything more about the play. I thought you had an angel with plenty of the stuff—\$20,000 and all that? Do you want to scoop the money without giving the boy a run for it?"

"No. I expect to put out a good show this time, but I'm not going to pay fancy salaries."

"You can't get a good leading woman under fifty to seventy-five plunks."

"Ah, the woods are full of talent. An advertisement would bring me out a bunch."

"Well, you're the doctor; but you want to understand that you can't get the play without Miss Bertrand."

"What royalty does the author want for this play?"

"Don't worry about that, Grimmer. Miss Bertrand's fifty will cover that."

"Well, where does he come in?"

"He doesn't come in at all," laughed the agent.

"Then you and Miss Bertrand are going to do him out of it, eh?"

Bob held his breath at this revelation.

"It's his first effort, and he doesn't know its value. I'll write him and tell him that he can't expect to get more out of it than his name on the bills. That ought to be compensation enough. It will get his name before the public and help him to sell his next play. In fact, he's lucky to get it produced on any old terms. Some agents in my place would try to pull his leg in addition."

"That's right," chuckled Grimmer. "The trouble with you, Thacker, you're too honest. You wouldn't steal a dollar more than you could get your fingers on."

"It's going to cost me something, anyway. I sent the play out to be typewritten by a competent person in the St. James Building, together with the parts. Feeney has gone after it."

"How much will it cost you?"

"Twenty dollars."

"Going to charge that against the author?"

"Oh, I'll charge him a hundred. He won't know the difference. He's more or less of a jay."

"If your boy brings the play back you'll let me have it to run over of course?"

"Certainly. You can read it right here in the office while I'm out at lunch."

"What's the matter with me taking it away? I can't judge of the thing on a jump."

"You can form an opinion of its merits by looking it over. You don't need to read it carefully. I'll guarantee it's a winner. If you like it, as I'll bet you will, just pull your angel's leg for \$250, and bring it to me as a guarantee of good faith, and I'll let you have the play and the typewritten parts."

Mr. Grimmer didn't like the idea of putting up so much money, and said so, so, after some argument, Thacker reduced his price to \$150, to which the manager agreed. By that time Bob

was worked up to a pitch of considerable indignation over what he considered the duplicity of Augustus Thacker. He determined then and there to recover his play, and take it to an honest agent, if he could find one. While he was revolving his plan in his mind the outer door opened and Feeney entered with a bundle under his arm. Bob jumped to his feet and intercepted him.

"Is that the play of 'The Red Light' you've got there?" he asked, eagerly.

"Sure. How did you know?"

"It's my play. Let me look at it."

"Can't do it. If it's your play you'll have to see the boss."

"You paid \$20 for having it typewritten, didn't you?"

"That is right."

"Well, here's the money. Leave the bundle with me and take the money in to Mr. Thacker."

"Oh, I can't do that. If you're going to pay the bill turn it over to the boss. If you want to look your play over Thacker will let you do it, I reckon."

"I've got no use for Mr. Thacker any more. I want my play, and I'm going to have it. That's all there is to it," said Bob, resolutely.

He swooped down on Feeney and grabbed the bundle, at the same time forcing the \$20 bill into his hand. A struggle ensued for the possession of the play, during which the table was overturned with a crash, and the office boy went down with it. This brought both Thacker and Grimmer to the door of the private room just as Bob snatched the bundle from Feeney's grasp.

"What does this mean," demanded the theatrical agent, angrily.

"He swiped the play from me," cried Feeney, trying to extricate himself from the table and debris.

"Who are you, young man, and what do you mean by such conduct in my office?"

"I am Robert Rider, the author of this play, and I've decided to withdraw it from your hands and take it elsewhere."

If a bomb had exploded in the place it couldn't have caused Augustus Thacker greater consternation.

CHAPTER IX.—Bob Makes a Plucky Rescue, and Visits Mrs. Canfield At Her Flat.

"You are Robert Rider?" he gasped. "Why, you're only a boy!"

"What of it?"

"Well, if you are Robert Rider, the author of the play, you can't take it away with you."

"Why not?" replied Bob, defiantly.

"Because I've got a bill of charges against it, and shall retain the manuscript until it is liquidated."

"If you mean the \$20 you paid for having the manuscript and parts typewritten, your boy has the money in his hand."

"Twenty dollars!" cried Mr. Thacker. "How did you know it cost \$20?"

"I heard you say so to that gentleman."

"Oh, I see," he sneered; "you are a Paul Pry. You were listening at the door to our private conversation."

"I couldn't help hearing it when you left the

door ajar yourself. You knew I was out here, for you told me to take a seat and wait."

"I didn't know you were the author of 'The Red Light.' If I had known it I would have invited you inside, as I was arranging with Mr. Grimmer to take out your play."

"If Mr. Grimmer wants to take out my play he'll have to make his arrangements with me. I want something more tangible than my name on the bills. I may be an easy mark in your estimation, but I know my rights and intend to protect them."

"Miss Bertrand can claim equal rights of authorship in that production. She assisted you largely in its construction. In fact, she practically licked your play into shape. As I represent Miss Bertrand, I shall consider it my duty to look after her interests."

"I am willing to acknowledge my obligation to Mrs. Canfield, whom you refer to as Miss Bertrand, but whatever she did was purely voluntary on her part, and she did not hint at any compensation. However, I have no objection to paying her out of whatever profits come to me when the drama is produced."

"Talk is cheap, young man. I shall insist on you leaving that bundle with me. Your rights will be looked after, don't you fear."

"I prefer to look after my own rights, so I mean to take this play with me."

"You'll either leave the play, or the room, in charge of a policeman," said the agent, menacingly, thinking to intimidate his country visitor.

"Call your officer. The play will go with me just the same, and I'll put it up to the judge to pass upon my rights."

His prompt reply rather discomfited the agent.

At that moment Mike Feeney, who had edged around behind Bob, made sundry signs to his boss, which that individual understood. He nodded, and then made a sudden grab at the visitor's arm.

As Bob drew back, Feeney snatched the bundle from his hand and dashed out at the door.

Mr. Thacker seized Bob to prevent him from following. As the young author's monkey was up, and he had muscles of steel, the theatrical agent found himself tripped up on the floor before he knew it. Bob then flew after the red-headed Feeney, who had got a flight of stairs the start of him. When Bob reached the street door Feeney was just disappearing around the corner of Fourteenth Street.

Bob was after him like a shot, and he could run some. The sidewalk, however, was crowded at that hour, and both pursued and pursuer were at a disadvantage. Feeney's complete familiarity with the neighborhood, and his ability to dodge the pedestrians better than Bob, enabled him to increase his distance in spite of all obstacles, and presently he kited around the corner of Irving Place and dashed toward Fifteenth Street. As Bob followed him, a third of a short block behind, a well-dressed young man stepped off the walk to cross over to the entrance to the Academy of Music.

A swiftly-driven cab came down the street at the moment which the young man did not observe. Bob, in spite of the fact that his thoughts and eyes were on Feeney, saw the young man's peril, and, casting all personal considerations to the wind, he sprang forward into the street, grabbed

the young fellow around the waist and swung him around out of danger.

It was touch and go with them both, for the wheels of the cab brushed against their sides. The young man looked bewildered, and then he seemed to realize the situation.

"You saved my life," he said, gratefully, grasping Bob by the hand.

"All right," replied Rider. "You're welcome," then he broke away and resumed his pursuit of Feeney, who by this time had vanished around the corner of Fifteenth Street, in the direction of Union Square.

When he reached the corner the red-headed boy was not in sight.

"He's got back to his office by this time, and Mr. Thacker has my play back in his hands. All I can do now is to see a lawyer about the matter."

The conversation he had overheard between Thacker and Manager Grimmer had given him a slight suspicion that Mrs. Canfield was in the scheme to rob him of his play, but he hated to believe that she was, since they had been so chummy at the farm. He pulled the paper containing her address, given him by Feeney, from his pocket, and studied it for a moment or two.

"I guess I'll go up and call on her," he mused, "and tell about my experience with Mr. Thacker. She seems to be on very friendly terms with the agent. Maybe she will be able to help me out; if she can't, I'll see a lawyer to-morrow."

Bob crossed the square to Broadway, and then walked up the Great White Way to West Thirty-ninth Street, on the corner of which stood the Casino. Then he walked down to the number given him by Feeney. He found it was a cheap-looking apartment house called the Esmeralda, whose highly-ornamented vestibule brought into strong relief its general tone of shabbiness and decay. Bob examined the names over the letter-boxes until his eye rested on the following:

"Canfield—Bertrand—Nadine—St. Clair," one under the other and pasted against the glass of one box. Bob pressed the electric button, and presently he heard a clicking sound at the door-knob. Entering, he walked through the dimly-lit, musty-smelling hall, and up several flights of stairs, until he came to a landing where a young lady with a washed-out countenance, dressed in a soiled wrapper, stood waiting.

"Whom did you wish to see?" she asked, abruptly.

"Mrs. Canfield."

"You mean Kittie Bertrand, I suppose. Walk inside."

Bob accompanied her to a sitting-room in which, upon a lounge, sat Mrs. Canfield and another young lady, also attired in wrappers, while a pair of chairs were occupied by two smoothly-shaven young men in their shirt-sleeves, all chatting and laughing in a free-and-easy way.

"Why, Bob Rider!" exclaimed Mrs. Canfield, springing to her feet with the utmost astonishment. "Is it possible it is really you?"

"Yes, ma'am; it's me, all right," replied Bob, rather embarrassed by the presence of the company, who regarded his presence with some interest, but no surprise.

"Well, I'm awfully glad to see you," she said, grasping his hand with considerable enthusiasm. "When did you come to town?"

"This morning, about eleven."

"This is a surprise to see you. Allow me to introduce you to my dear friends, Gladys Nadine and Maude St. Clair. They rent this flat with me. Girls, this is Bob Rider, of Sunnyside Cottage, Greene County, up-State, a rising young dramatic author. Gladys is with the 'Wizard of Oz,' at the Casino. Mr. Montague Raleigh, Bob Rider. Mr. Raleigh is in vaudeville. He's at the Victoria this week. Mr. Jack Deforest, Bob Rider. Mr. Deforest was with the 'King of the Peacocks' last season. At present he is resting. And now that you all know each other, make yourself as comfortable as possible. If you feel warm, Bob, take off your jacket. We don't stand on any ceremony here."

Thus speaking, Mrs. Canfield made room for Bob on the lounge between herself and Gladys Nadine.

CHAPTER X.—Bob Comes to an Agreement With Thacker and Grimmer.

"How did you find me out, Bob?" asked the actress.

"I called at Mr. Augustus Thacker's office and his office boy gave me your address."

"What did Mr. Thacker have to say about the prospects of putting your melodrama on?"

"He was trying to make a deal with a manager named Grimmer, who has an angel in tow, to take it on the road."

"That so?" replied the lady, with a look of interest.

"Yes. The arrangement was that you were to be engaged to play the heroine. I thought you were rehearsing with one of Brougham's companies."

All present turned and looked at Mrs. Canfield in some surprise, and that lady blushed a bit.

"You must have misunderstood me, Bob," she said.

Bob knew that he had not misunderstood her, for if she had spoken about Broughman once she had a dozen or more times at the farm. However, he was too much of a gentleman to contradict a lady, so he let it go at that.

"By the way," he continued, "I had some trouble with Mr. Thacker about my play."

"What was the trouble?"

"To tell you the truth, I don't like his methods," replied the young dramatist, bluntly. "He told Mr. Grimmer, the manager, in my hearing, that I wasn't to be considered in the matter at all. He said that the \$50 to be paid you per week would cover the royalty as well as your services. Mr. Grimmer was also to pay your expenses."

"Fifty per and ex. ought to put you on Easy Street, Miss Bertrand," said Montagu Raleigh; "that is, if the ghost walks regularly."

"Sounds almost too good to be true," chirped Gladys Nadine. "If you get all that, dear, you'll be cutting it too fat for Maude and me."

"There must be some mistake about me drawing your royalty, Bob," said Mrs. Canfield. "Why, that sounds too absurd for anything, doesn't it, Mr. Deforest?"

"I should smile," replied the unemployed performer. "The profession is not usually so fortunate. What is the name of your play, Mr. Rider?"

"'The Red Light.'"

"Is it a lurid melodrama?"

"It's a melodrama in four acts."

"I s'pose there is a lot of Stand-aside-villain-and-let-me-pass in it to catch the sympathies of the working people," grinned Mr. Raleigh.

"And the heroine is strongly emotional, of course," added Mr. Deforest.

"And is persecuted from the rise of the curtain till the villain gets it where the chicken got the axe," giggled Gladys.

"And the hero is a manly, self-sacrificing fellow who wears his heart on his sleeve, like all heroes do," warbled Miss St. Clair, sweetly.

Bob looked at the four professionals suspiciously, wondering whether they were guying his play. Mrs. Canfield came to his aid by assuring the company that "The Red Light" was a play above the average, and would not disgrace a Broadway playhouse.

At that point the electric bell in the kitchen sounded, betokening more visitors, and Miss St. Clair left the room to push the button. In a few minutes she returned with two callers, who proved to be Augustus Thacker and Manager Grimmer. Both were rather taken aback to find Bob Rider on the scene, and the theatrical agent hastily called Mrs. Canfield aside to ask how the boy came to be there. Whatever passed between them caused Mr. Thacker to make a change of front.

"I want to apologize for what happened at my office to-day, Mr. Rider. I hope you'll let bygones be bygones. I am prepared to make satisfactory terms with you in regard to your play. Miss Bertrand has made your cause her own, and consequently you're bound to get a square deal."

"Yes, Bob," put in the actress, "I have insisted that you shall be treated right or Mr. Thacker will have to step down and out in the matter. It has been agreed to appoint you the treasurer of the Red Light Co., if you will accept the position, and you will be asked to assist in conducting the rehearsals. That will be satisfactory to you, Bob?" she asked, in the old fascinating way that had caught his fancy on the farm.

Bob concluded that he would take a chance on it, and told her so. She advised him to accept the position of treasurer and go out with the company.

"You will gain a knowledge of show life that will be valuable to you hereafter, Bob," she said. "Besides, you will handle the money and be able to pay yourself."

Manager Grimmer, who had glanced through Bob's play, and expected to get possession of it when he had pulled his angel's leg to the tune of \$150, was very enthusiastic about the possibilities of the piece.

"The play is going to be a knock-out," he said.

As it was close on to five now, Bob said he'd have to be going, since he had to look up a place to stop at.

"Come down to the Trafalgar, where I put up. It's a professional house. You can get a room for from three per up, and board yourself outside," said Deforest.

He obligingly offered to guide Bob to the establishment, and the boy accepted his generous offer.

"Don't fail to call at my office about noon tomorrow," said Mr. Thacker, genially.

"Are you people going near the paper office?" asked Manager Grimmer, following Bob and De-

forest into the next room, where the latter's hat and coat were.

"Within a block," replied the actor.

"Here's \$2, Rider. Have 'em insert this advertisement in next Tuesday's issue," handing Bob the bill and a slip of paper.

"All right. I'll see that the paper gets it," replied Bob.

"Let's see what the gazabo is advertising for," said Deforest, when they got down to the street door.

Bob opened the note and read as follows:

WANTED—Leading man. Good dresser on and off. No fancy salary, but money sure. Also, a man for heavy lead, and a character man to manage stage. Pay own. No fares advanced unless I know you. Address Martin Grimmer, Mgr., Red Light Co., care Thacker, No. — Union Square, E.

"Looks as if he was after cheap people," said Deforest. "If I were you, Rider, I'd insist on good performers. A cheap bunch will only kill your play. What sort of an angel has Grimmer in tow?"

"A young man worth \$20,000."

The actor whistled.

"Grimmer will bleach him. Lor', how lucky some people are!"

CHAPTER XI.—Bob Begins Work for Manager Grimmer.

Martin Grimmer, who was about to direct the destinies of Bob Rider's four-act melodrama, "The Red Light," was, as Michael Feeney had remarked, a tart manager. He clung to the fringe of theatricals, eking out a living that was sometimes luxurious, after a fashion, but most often precarious, the means for which were provided by people of an extremely confiding nature, who had an ardent desire to shine in the dramatic profession—either as embryo managers, or with the view of startling the world with their histrionic genius. The bait that he usually employed was a three-line advertisement, which ran something after this fashion:

WANTED—PARTNER who will invest \$200 in repertoire and act as business manager and treasurer. Experience not necessary. A sure proposition. Address, Martin Grimmer, Trafalgar Hotel, New York.

All of Mr. Grimmer's undertakings, ostensibly in the interest of his dupes, but actually in his own, were rank failures.

His chief object was not so much the putting the company on the road as to separate the \$200 or more from his gullible partner. A few days before Bob Rider's visit to New York he had made the greatest catch in his checkered career. George Sutton, a young college graduate who had visions of becoming a successful theatrical manager, answered his advertisement for a partner. He had just received a legacy of \$20,000, and was anxious to learn the ropes. He called on Mr. Grimmer and had a talk with that foxy gentleman. When, in a burst of confidence, he informed the

manager of the extent of his pile, Mr. Grimmer nearly fell off his chair, but managed to control himself. He assured Sutton that he was the very person the young man needed to put him on a level with the best-known managers of the day. It would take a little money, of course; something more than \$200, to work things properly. Sutton replied that he was willing to spend all the money necessary to accomplish his ambitious dreams.

Manager Grimmer then proceeded to lay out a scheme for his own enrichment. He told Sutton that he would make it his business to secure a first-class play and a suitable company to put the same on the road. He drew up a liberal estimate of the cost of the paper required to advertise the show, and quoted all the other expenses connected with the enterprise. Sutton took his word for it all, and finally, as an evidence of good faith, advanced Mr. Grimmer \$250 for the purpose of starting the ball rolling.

With such a gullible and moneyed angel in tow Mr. Grimmer decided that this time he would put out a show in earnest, and if it panned out he would take care to secure the lion's share of the profits. On the day following Bob's visit to Mrs. Canfield's flat he appeared at Augustus Thacker's office according to arrangement with that gentleman. Michael Feeney was in his chair, and he cast a doubtful glance at Bob, as the young dramatist entered the room. He knew that his boss and the country boy had patched up their differences, but he wasn't certain how Bob regarded his conduct in depriving him of his play. Bob soon showed that he entertained no hard feelings on the subject. As far as he was concerned the incident was closed.

"Want to see the boss?" volunteered Feeney, with unusual readiness.

"You can let him know I'm here," replied Bob.

Feeney accordingly went into the private room and announced Bob's presence in the outer office.

The author of "The Red Light" was invited to walk inside. He found Thacker and Grimmer together.

"I suppose you don't mind making yourself generally useful till the company gets out?" said Manager Grimmer to Bob.

"Certainly not, provided I'm not expected to live on air," answered the lad.

Thacker grinned and was satisfied there was nothing slow about the young author.

"Oh, I'll pay your expenses, and a little over," replied Grimmer. "I've rented an office on Broadway, and I want somebody I can trust to represent me when I'm out, as well as to do my errands. As you are to be connected with the business end of the show, why, you might as well get into harness at once."

"I'm ready to do whatever you want, Mr. Grimmer."

"All right. That's settled, then. The office is Room 23, N. — Broadway. It isn't fitted up yet, as I only hired it this morning, but the furniture and other fixings will be there about two o'clock, also the sign painter to decorate the glass panel of the outer door. Here is the key. I want you to be there when the stuff shows up. Feeney will give you some lithographs and photos to tack on the walls. Everything is paid for except the sign work. I don't know how much that will cost, but here is a \$2 bill to pay the man. Get him to make

out a bill as a voucher, as my backer will require an accounting of all money expended," and he winked expressively at Mr. Thacker.

Bob was told that he would be expected to be on hand daily between ten and three or four, then he was dismissed.

"I see Grimmer is goin' to take a regular show out this time," said Feeney, when Bob returned to the outer office. "He must have struck a gold mine."

"I guess he's got a good backer, for it will take money to produce my melodrama in proper shape."

As it was now half-past twelve, Bob said he was going to lunch, after which he was going up to Mr. Grimmer's office.

CHAPTER XII.—Bob Calls on Stella Hamilton.

Soon after Bob let himself into the bare room hired by Manager Grimmer for a temporary office, the sign painter appeared. Bob handed him the copy he was to transfer in black letters to the glass. When the painter had finished his job the door bore the following legend:

SUTTON & GRIMMER

"The Red Light," and other attractions.

Bob wondered what the other attractions were. In due time a cheap roll-top desk, a table and four chairs arrived and were placed in suitable positions. Then Bob opened the bundle he had brought from Thacker's office, containing half a dozen lithos, some old play-bills, a dozen photos, some ancient dramatic publications, and a tack-hammer and tacks. He placed the publications on the table, and decorated the walls with the rest of the stuff. About this time Mr. Grimmer arrived, with a bottle of ink, pens and pen-holders, a blank pad, and a couple of account books.

He sat down at the desk and made out some copy for letterheads, envelopes, and contracts.

"You're not very well acquainted with the city, are you, Rider?" he asked Bob.

"No, sir; but I guess I can find my way about."

"The next corner is Thirty-eighth Street."

"I know that."

"Well, I want you to take this copy to a printer on Forty-second Street, near Sixth Avenue. He does theatrical work of this kind. It's on the north side of the street. Sixth Avenue is the next street east of Broadway up here. It's west of Broadway below Thirty-second street. They cross at Herald Square. You can't mistake Sixth Avenue, because the elevated structure is on it. Well, give the printer, there's his name, this copy and that deposit, and tell him I must positively have the stuff to-morrow afternoon. Understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"All right. Get up there as soon as you can. Lock the door, for I'm going away, and you needn't return till the morning, for there's nothing for you to do."

Bob performed his errand all right, and then spent the rest of the afternoon in Central Park.

After supper that evening he called on the Hamiltons, who lived in a select apartment house on West Forty-fourth Street.

Bob spent a very pleasant evening with Stella and her mother, and left at ten o'clock, after promising to call soon again. About eleven o'clock next morning, while Bob was reading an old copy of the paper, and waiting for Mr. Grimmer to appear, the door opened and a very handsome young man of about twenty-two years of age walked in. As Bob's eyes rested on him he gave a start of surprise, for the visitor proved to be the young man he had rescued from a serious, if not fatal, accident the previous afternoon on Irving Place, when he was chasing Feeney to recover the manuscript of his play.

The recognition was mutual.

"Why, if my eyes do not deceive me, you are the boy who saved my life yesterday," said the caller, advancing with outstretched hands.

"That's right," admitted Bob.

"Well, I'm awfully glad to meet you again. What's your name? Are you working for Mr. Grimmer?"

"Yes, I'm working for Sutton & Grimmer, and my name is Bob Rider."

"Let me introduce myself as George Sutton, Mr. Grimmer's partner."

"Are you really Mr. Sutton?" said Bob, in great surprise.

"I am. And I'll see that you're well taken care of, Bob."

"Thank you, Mr. Sutton. I suppose you don't know that I'm the author of 'The Red Light,' the melodrama you and Mr. Grimmer are about to put on the road?"

"You don't mean that, do you?" cried Sutton, incredulously.

"I certainly do. Mr. Grimmer will be here shortly and he will bear me out."

"Well, well, I am astonished. I took you for the office boy," he said, laughingly. "You look very young for a professional dramatist, and especially the author of a play that Mr. Grimmer assures me is a winner."

"I'm growing older every day, Mr. Sutton, and will have a mustache by and by."

At that moment Mr. Grimmer walked in and greeted Sutton effusively.

He was about to introduce Bob, when the former said:

"Oh, we already know each other."

Then he explained to the manager how Bob had saved him from serious inquiry.

"I suppose you'll introduce that scene into one of your future plays," said Mr. Grimmer to Bob.

Sutton and the young dramatist laughed, and then Grimmer proceeded to tap his angel for the \$150 to get possession of the play from Mr. Thacker.

The young man wrote a check for the sum, payable to Martin Grimmer. The manager endorsed it and handed it to Bob.

"Take that down to Thacker and bring back your play and the acting parts."

Both jumped on a car and got off at Union Square. On entering Thacker's office he found it well filled with professional-looking people, all of whom were talking shop. None of them looked over-prosperous, while several were decidedly shabby. Bob noticed that McKean Ranter occupied the center of the stage, so to speak.

Bob rushed over to Feeney.

Mr. Thacker is engaged, I suppose?" he said.

"I should smile," grinned the office boy. "Anything important?"

"I have come down for the manuscript of my play. Here is Mr. Sutton's check to cover Mr. Thacker's fee for placing it. Will you take it in to him?"

"Sure, I will," and he did so.

He came out presently and said the boss would like to see him. Bob entered the room and found the agent engaged with a dashing chorus girl.

"This check, Rider, is my perquisite for placing your play, understand. I shall expect you to remit a similar amount, in any way that's most convenient to you, after you get on the road. Just sign that little document, which is simply an evidence of your indebtedness to me in the matter."

He handed Bob his pen and pushed the paper toward him. Bob read it over carefully, to see that there were no traps in it, and then put his autograph to it.

"That completes our business relations, I believe," said the young dramatist.

"Yes, unless you should happen to default in your payments; but, as your play strikes me as a winner, I think we shall have no trouble on that score."

"Not if I get a square deal from the management, and I am sure I can depend on Mr. Sutton, at any rate."

CHAPTER XIII.—Bob Rehearses His Melodrama

Having got possession of Bob's melodrama, Mr. Grimmer proceeded to engage people for the various parts as cheaply as he could, using as an inducement "a long season and money sure."

Mr. Grimmer had engaged a hall on Sixth Avenue for the company to rehearse in, and as soon as the manager had made up the cast the professionals were directed to report there on a certain morning at ten o'clock to hear the author read his play and receive their parts.

A few minutes before ten Bob locked up the office, and, accompanied by George Sutton, with whom he had become quite chummy, and Mr. Grimmer, he proceeded to the hall with the typewritten manuscript under his arm.

The rehearsals were to be conducted under the joint direction of Bob and the stage manager, and both were promptly on hand next morning at the appointed hour.

"Let's get to work," said Bob, a few minutes after his arrival at the hall. "There's a set cottage on rocks near upper entrance, right. Just put a chair there to represent the cottage, Mr. Dorkins," addressing the stage manager. "Put another to represent tavern, which is at second entrance, left. Push that small table in front of it with a chair on either side. We will now consider the stage set for the act. Let me see, Mr. Richards plays Gosport, the old fisherman. Where is Mr. Richards?"

"Here I am," said the actor engaged for second old man.

"Well, begin. You're discovered seated on a rock looking through a telescope seaward. You rise and come down to a point about on a line with that table," said Bob. "Mrs. Parker," he added, looking at the bunch of ladies.

"Yes," said the actress in question.

"You are cast for Mrs. Meiggs, I believe. Be ready to take up your cue."

None of the ladies and gentleman, Mrs. Canfield excepted, seemed to have made any very serious effort to master their lines for the first rehearsal, and all read from their parts, more or less. The first rehearsal was more of an informal breaking in than anything else, but for all that Bob wouldn't stand any slop work.

Several of the performers got to squabbling over their relative positions in a certain scene, and the stage manager's efforts to straighten it out only made matters worse.

Bob then interfered and called the whole bunch down. What he said was right to the point. "Oh, you aren't the manager of the show," retorted one of the comedians.

"Mr. Sutton," said Bob, addressing the angel, "does my authority go, or doesn't it?"

"It goes, every time," replied the junior manager, promptly. "Ladies and gentlemen," he added, to the company, "Mr. Rider may not be an actor, but he wrote this play and he understands how things ought to be done. He will not object to any suggestions made on your part in good faith, and will consider and adopt them if he thinks proper."

George Sutton spoke courteously, but firmly, and his speech carried great weight. After that Bob had little further trouble. When business was over for the day, Bob politely but decidedly gave the people to understand that he expected them to know the larger part of their lines on the following day, and they were satisfied that he meant what he said, and that they'd hear from him if they didn't come to time.

Mrs. Canfield complimented Bob on the firm way he had handled the people at the very start.

"You have marked executive ability, Bob, and have the power to make people obey without necessary fuss. You will be able to accomplish far more than some stage managers who browbeat and swear at the performers. As soon as the people know you better, any grouch they may entertain against you will vanish like dew before the rising sun. Some actors are chronic kickers, but they know and recognize a master mind when they meet one. The people who are putting up the greatest howl outside now on their way home will probably turn out to be your best friends and admirers later on."

And the actress's words turned out true. As the rehearsals progressed the grouch that many of the professionals entertained against the young dramatist gradually wore off. He consulted frequently with the stage manager and took all suggestions into consideration. He permitted the two comedians and soubrette all latitude to amplify their parts, but he set his foot down on gagging, except in a few instances where it was shown to him that it was sure to improve their scene. By the time the rehearsals were well under way he had the whole company broken to harness, and they all were now of the opinion that he was a first-class chap, even if he wasn't a professional.

Nearly all the members of the company dropped into the Broadway office after the first week to solicit advances, as their finances were at a

low ebb, and all got enough to see them through until the company took the road. The route having been satisfactorily booked; the printing, which was extensive, in readiness for delivery; and the scenery, special and otherwise, mechanical effects, properties, etc., packed ready for transportation, the advance agent of the organization departed for Pompton, where the company was to begin its tour. In a few days a bulky letter of advices was received by mail at the office, addressed to Sutton & Grimmer. Bob and the angel were in the office at the time, chatting pleasantly together, and Sutton opened the envelope. The letter contained useful information intended for Mr. Grimmer's instruction. The following, relating to hotel accommodation for the people, at professional rates, Bob posted up at the hall at the next rehearsal:

| | | |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| *Pompton House |\$2.00 single | \$1.75 double |
| **Taylor's Hotel |1.50 " | 1.25 " |
| ***Palmer House |1.00 " | .75 " |

Remarks: *Best house in town. Accommodation first-class. Free 'bus. **Patronized by the profession. Good, Free bathrooms and free 'bus. ***European plan. Restaurant, table d'hote and à la carte. Close to depot.

To the above Mr. Grimmer added the following: "Members of this company will report at the Erie ferryhouse, foot of West Twenty-third street, Saturday morning, in time to take the 7:30 boat for Jersey City. Personal baggage must be in readiness for collection by expressman on previous afternoon.

"Sutton & Grimmer, Managers."

CHAPTER XIV.—The Unmasking of a Rascal.

When Bob appeared at the office on Thursday morning about half-past nine he was rather surprised to see George Sutton standing at the entrance of the building.

"Good-morning, Bob," he said, rather solemnly.

"Good-morning, Mr. Sutton. You're on hand early today. Going to the rehearsal?"

"No. I wanted to have a talk with you before Mr. Grimmer came down."

"He isn't likely to be here before one to-day. He went to a high jinks at the club last night, and I guess it was well along toward morning before he got to his downy couch."

They walked up to the office, and Sutton seated himself at the desk.

"Bob," said the angel, "I think I can trust you."

"You certainly can," replied the boy, earnestly, surprised at Sutton's words and manner.

"What do you know about Mr. Grimmer?"

"Not a great deal. You've known him longer than I have."

"A few days longer, perhaps. Look here, Bob, I've put about \$8,000 into this show so far."

"Eight thousand?"

"Yes. Every time Mr. Grimmer asked me for the cash to pay this bill or that, or advance the money for such or such a thing, I've come up without question. I know it takes considerable coin to put a good show on the road, and I wanted to back a good one or none. Last night I was in-

roduced to a theatrical man who claimed to know a whole lot about Mr. Grimmer. What he told me took my breath away."

"What did he tell you?"

"In the first place, he said that, as a real manager, Mr. Grimmer wasn't worth the powder to blow him to pieces. He told me that Mr. Grimmer lived on the credulity of the people he caught through his advertisements. He said most of Mr. Grimmer's dupes coughed up anywhere from \$50 to \$200 for the privilege of becoming the business manager or treasurer of a show that existed only on paper, and that one young lady, now behind the counter of a department store had transferred the whole of a \$1,500 legacy piecemeal to him under the impression that he could make a star out of her. In her case he actually did hire a company of tenth-rate professionals and put 'The Lady of Lyons' on the road, in which she was featured as Pauline, but the company was stranded somewhere out in Pennsylvania, and while Mr. Grimmer returned to the Rialto in a Pullman, the others, including the unfortunate girl, were obliged to leave their trunks for board and get back to New York as best they could."

"That was a hard reputation to give you of your partner," said Bob, not greatly surprised himself, after the hints he had received from Mr. Thacker's office boy, who seemed to know a whole lot more about Mr. Grimmer than he would give away.

"He didn't know that Mr. Grimmer was my partner."

"Did you tell him?"

"No, he went on to tell me that Mr. Grimmer had lately given such evidences of unusually prosperity that it was the talk of the Rialto that he must have caught a gudgeon with a fat wad. He said Mr. Grimmer had announced that he was putting a new and original melodrama, called 'The Red Light,' on the road, headed by a third-rate actress, known to the profession as Kittle Bertrand. He claimed it was going to be a winner, and he expected to make enough to own a bank by the time he got back. Well, the gentleman I was talking to said he felt sorry for the angel who was backing the show with his good money, as it wasn't likely he would ever get a cent back, whether the company made any money or not. He said Mr. Grimmer would take care to manipulate the expenses so that they would appear to eat up all the profits, if there were any, and that if business was not very good he would call on his backer to make up the actual or apparent deficiency, in default of which he would immediately dissolve their partnership and go it alone if the prospects warranted the risk."

"His estimate of Mr. Grimmer doesn't sound very encouraging," said Bob.

"I should say not. It makes me uneasy, for I don't like to think that I am up against such a kind of man. He certainly does present a swell appearance to what he did when I first met him. He was almost shabby then. He hasn't asked me to loan him a single dollar for his personal uses. What's the inference? That he has been making a good rake-off from the \$8,000 which I have advanced to fit out the show."

"It would look like it," admitted Bob.

At that moment there was a light tap on the door.

"Come in," said Bob.

The door opened and admitted Mrs. Canfield.

"Come right in, Miss Bertrand," said Sutton, in his genial way.

Her face was flushed, her eyes had a suspicious redness, and her step was a bit unsteady as she walked to a chair and sank into it. Bob had never seen her look so strange before, and rather marveled at it.

"I'm afraid I'm a little off this morning," she said, in a slightly hysterical way. "I've been ill."

Sutton smiled slightly.

"You called to see Mr. Grimmer, I suppose?" he said, politely.

"No," putting her hand to her throat as if something choked her, "I called to see you—and Bob. Mr. Grimmer won't be down here till afternoon. He and Gus Thacker went to the club last night, and they've got to sleep it off."

Bob and Sutton looked at each other, and then waited for the actress to proceed.

"Mr. Sutton, you have put up the money—as much as \$8,000—to start this show on the road," she said, with some hesitation.

"I have," replied Sutton, surprised at her words.

"And you have never suspected that Mr. Grimmer has been working you right along?"

"This is rather plain language, Miss Bertrand," said Sutton.

"It is the truth. It may not be to my interest, nor the interest of others concerned, to expose the trickery practiced on you, but——" she put her hand to her throat again, "I can't forget that—that you saved my sister's life."

"I saved your sister's life!" exclaimed Sutton, astonished. "What do you mean?"

"You and Bob. Last week you loaned me \$100 through Bob. Before that I appealed to Grimmer, explained the circumstances but he turned me down. My sister was dangerously ill. She is poor—has two children, and was deserted by her husband. Money was urgently necessary to pay the doctor and other bills. To send her to a hospital in her condition was certain death. I had no money to speak of myself. When Grimmer wouldn't help me out I went to Thacker but he said he was broke which was a lie. I did not know what to do. I was due at the hall for rehearsal but I was nearly crazy for my sister is more to me than all the world. On my way up the avenue I met Bob. He saw I looked bad and asked me what was the matter. I told him how I was fixed and begged him to try and get the loan of a hundred from you. I asked him not to tell you why I wanted the money, if he could help it."

"He didn't tell me," said Sutton. "He asked me for the loan of \$100 for himself. He never said a word about you. I gave it to him as I would to any friend I thought a lot of."

The actress sprang up, threw her arms around Bob's neck and kissed him.

"You have been a good friend to me Bob," she cried, half hysterically. "The money saved my sister's life. At any rate, Mr. Sutton, the money came from you, and I am grateful to you."

"You are welcome to it, since it was for you Bob borrowed it," said Sutton.

"I came here this morning not only to thank you, but to put you on your guard against Grimmer. He looks on you as the easiest mark he has ever run across. Although you have furnished the money to put the show out, he does not intend to give you a square deal. If the play catches on it is his intention to get rid of you. And he has no intention of paying you any royalty whatever, Bob. He expects to make you earn your \$15 as his general assistant, and that's all you'll get."

"How did you find all this out, Mrs. Canfield?" asked Bob.

"I have suspected his intentions from the first, and I mean to stand by you, Bob, and try and force him to do you justice."

"Thanks; but how about Mr. Sutton? Why didn't you give me a hint so I could warn him of what he was up against?"

"Because I was looking-out for my own interest, as well as yours. You couldn't get your play produced without a backer, and if your play went on the road I was sure of a job, and I need one badly. Why should I say anything to frighten off the angel Grimmer had in tow, and thus spoil your chances and mine? I had no interest in Mr. Sutton until he loaned me that money through you. Besides, I did not know till last night the full measure of Grimmer's duplicity—I only suspected his methods."

Mrs. Canfield then went on to state that Grimmer and Thacker had spent a part of the previous evening at her flat before they went to the club. She had overheard Grimmer, who was under the influence of a number of highballs, tell Thacker how he had fleeced his angel out of a considerable part of the money he had advanced to equip the show. He had bought second-hand scenery at a bargain, had it touched up and charged it on the books as new. Most of the properties had been gotten in the same way, brightened up and billed as made to order.

He had arranged with the printer for a stiff rake-off, which, of course, actually came out of the backer's pocket. Altogether he had managed to secure about \$2,000 in this manner. He would, of course settle with the various managers himself, and hold on to the money, rendering a statement of expenses largely in excess of the real facts.

In fact, he had everything cut and dried for swindling Sutton at every point of the game, relying for success on the young man's professional ignorance. When Mrs. Canfield finished, Mr. Sutton was almost paralyzed with the astounding revelation. He thanked her politely for the information she had furnished, and then told her she had better go up to the hall at once, where she would be late at the rehearsal, and tell the stage manager that Bob would not be there that day.

"I may have killed the show," she said, almost regretfully. "If I have, I am sorry for Bob's sake as well as my own; but, after what you did for me, even unknowingly, I could not let you be robbed further without putting you wise to your risk."

"Don't worry about the show, Miss Bertrand,"

said Sutton. "It will go out on schedule time. I shall back Bob and his play with my last dollar, if necessary. But you need not be surprised if Mr. Grimmer remains on the Rialto."

CHAPTER XV.—In a Struggle for Fame Bob Comes Out On Top.

"Well, Bob, I seem to be up against it hard," said George Sutton, as soon as Mrs. Canfield left the office.

"You are, for a fact, and I'm dead sorry for you," replied Bob. "What are you going to do?"

"You will stand by me, of course?"

"Bet your life. To the last trump."

"Well, I've got \$12,000 left. I'm going to run the show myself."

"That would suit me to the queen's taste; but can you?"

"What's to prevent me? I can hire a good business manager, can't I?"

"You can do that, all right. But suppose Mr. Grimmer asserts his alleged right as your partner. He will probably get out an injunction against the show. Even a temporary one, until the case was argued in court, would tie us up for a week, at any rate. That would give us a black eye."

"I can head that off by having him arrested at once on the charge of swindling."

"How are you going to convict him?"

"His reputation must be pretty bad to begin with. Then Miss Bertrand's testimony——"

"Amounts to nothing. It cannot be corroborated, and he and Thacker will both swear that Mrs. Canfield imagined the conversation."

"I'll have the printer and the manager of the Jersey City storehouse put on the stand and questioned in detail about the real prices of the stuff covered by their bills. I don't imagine they'll perjure themselves under oath to oblige Mr. Grimmer."

"You could do that, I suppose," admitted Bob. "In any case the show is likely to be stalled until the case is disposed of."

"I'm not sure about that. I want you to come with me now around to a good theatrical agency. If I can get a first-class man I'll close with him on his own terms. I'll send the show out under his direction with the understanding that you represent me until I join the company. You will act as his assistant. How will that do?"

"It will do all right. I'll see you get all that's coming to you."

"That's all I want, and I'll see that you get all that's coming to you according to your original agreement."

"I've no fear but that you'll treat me white, Mr. Sutton, and I'll do the same by you. I wish you could find some tangible evidence against Mr. Grimmer that would compel him to draw out voluntarily."

Sutton pulled down the account book of the firm. "Every cent I've paid out is down in this book, and Mr. Grimmer has been careful to procure a voucher to offset the expenditures. If I could prove in court that a number of the more important vouchers are padded, and do not represent the actual cost of the articles billed, I'd have the

rascal where the hair is short. The only way I see to get at the bottom of the swindle is to get the men who furnished the bills into court and force them to testify. I have been charged for new scenery and pass upon its value. If it's old material touched up, he'll know the fact at a glance, and will be able to appraise its real value, and testify to that before a magistrate. I can get estimates for our paper from two or three other show-printing establishments, and use them as exhibits of overcharge. In fact, I think I will have no great difficulty in cornering Mr. Grimmer and forcing him out of the company."

After some further talk, Sutton and Bob went to a first-class dramatic agency and made inquiries for an A-1 business manager. The agent had a good one on his books and agreed to have him call on Mr. Sutton that evening at his house.

Sutton then detailed Bob to go to three show-printing houses and get estimates on the work already turned out for him, while he started for the Savage establishment to try and secure a competent man to go to Jersey City to pass on the scenery and properties paid for and awaiting transportation to Pompton. Bob finished his business satisfactorily in time to take lunch, after which he returned to the office. There was no evidence that Mr. Grimmer had turned up yet, so Bob went on up to the hall where the company was going through the final rehearsal. The last act was half-way through, and Bob sat back and let the stage manager direct matters as he had been doing. At the close of the proceedings he returned to the office and found Mr. Grimmer at his desk, looking kind of seedy. The manager asked him if he had just come from the hall, and if he had seen Mr. Sutton that day, and Bob answered "yes" to both questions.

After a short time the manager went away, but Bob waited for Sutton to show up. He did, shortly after five, and he looked triumphant.

"I got a man to go over to Jersey City with me, and after some objection on the part of the storehouse people he was permitted to overhaul all the stuff paid for by me. He told me that the bulk of the scenery was second-hand, and that some of it looked as if it had been on the road several seasons. The only new material was the lighthouse, and the set tavern in the first act, together with one tree piece. The properties were all second-hand. He gave me a rough estimate of its value, and what it had probably cost to repair and patch up. I then interviewed the manager of the place and demanded to know why I had been charged for new scenery and properties when it was really second-hand. The overcharge was fully \$1,500 on my expert's estimate. The manager denied that such overcharge had been made, and showed the entry in his books approximately the amount my man had made it. He admitted that he had rendered the bill at the rate of new stuff at the request of Mr. Grimmer, and that when the manager brought him my check he returned him the sum of \$1,600. I threatened to make things warm for him unless he gave me a signed statement that I could use against Mr. Grimmer, and I've got it in my pocket. Now let me see the estimates you got from the printers."

Bob showed three, nearly equal in amount, the highest being \$300 lower than the bill Sutton had paid.

"I'll see the printer in the morning and afterwards have it out with Mr. Grimmer. I'll get here before you go to the last rehearsal, and will probably see you afterwards at the hall and let you know the result."

That night Sutton engaged the business manager for the show, and next morning called on the printer, who admitted that the real price of the paper furnished was \$250 lower than the bill called for, which had been made out at Grimmer's request, to whom the printer returned that amount on receipt of Sutton's check. At the angel's request he reluctantly furnished him with a signed statement admitting all the facts, and then Sutton went to the office, where he found his guilty partner. What passed between them never came out, but it was an unpleasant interview, and ended with Grimmer's surrender and withdrawal from the firm with his ill-gotten gains to console himself with.

On Monday morning the show proceeded to Binghamton, and during the trip Bob and the performers read the flattering notice printed in the Pompton "Daily Times," where "The Red Light" had had its initial performance.

On the following morning the Binghamton press had equally complimentary notices about the play, but did not speak quite as well about the company, Miss Bertrand excepted.

"The Red Light," played to fair, good and record houses during the whole of its tour, and was well received by the dramatic critics. At the beginning of its last month it played in the Fourteenth Street Theatre, New York, and was so successful that time held by three other companies was bought off by Sutton, and the play wound up the season at the house to S. R. O. attendance. During the first week Bob fulfilled his promise to Stella by sending her and her mother a pass for a box. They enjoyed the show immensely, and couldn't praise Bob's melodrama too much. Bob sent for his mother and Sam Summer and had them down as his guests for a week. Both expressed themselves enthusiastically about the play. Bob's royalties for the season amounted to about \$4,500, all clear profit. Sutton made a handsome profit himself, well up in the thousands. He and Bob took the play out for a 40-week tour the following season, with new scenery and a much better company, which included Miss Bertrand, whom Bob wouldn't shake for even a better actress, and their profits were larger. During the summer Bob wrote another play, which, however, he and Sutton did not produce for another year, as "The Red Light" continued to be a winner.

Bob is now well known as a successful and famous dramatist, and his plays are much sought after by the best managers; but George Sutton, who has developed into a capable manager, has the call on anything that his friend writes.

Bob is engaged to Stella Hamilton, and they intend to be married at the close of the present season. Although he is fairly rich, and has an assured position in the dramatic world, he says that the happiest season of his life was when he was making A Struggle for Fame.

Next week's issue will contain "THE YOUNG MONEY MAGNATE; or, THE WALL STREET BOY WHO BROKE THE MARKET."

HARRY THE HALF-BACK

OR

A FOOTBALLIST FOR FAIR

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER IX.—(continued)

It was suggested that, lured by the beauty of the scenery, he had climbed up on the steep bluff overlooking the lake, had lost his footing and fallen in and been drowned.

The lake was dragged all along the shore, but the body was not found, of course.

One or two of the searching parties had passed within fifty yards of the old cabin where Winslow was at that very moment a prisoner, but had not discovered the existence of the cabin.

By noon the search had been abandoned. All had been done that could be done.

Some thought that Winslow had, for come unaccountable reason, fled, but Walter Denman hooted at the idea.

"Something has happened to Harry, I am sure," he said. "He is not the fellow to flee from anybody or anything."

Professor Marshfield had suggested telegraphing to the youth's parents, but Denman persuaded him not to do so, as he feared it might be too much of a shock to Winslow's mother.

"No; let us wait," he said. "I am confident that Harry will turn up soon, all right, and with a good explanation for his absence."

After dinner was over the minds of all turned to the football game which was to be played that afternoon.

It was the first of a series of three games for the championship that were to be played by the Wrightmore and Larchmount teams.

Parker and Westley were sad and solemn-looking, for they realized that unless Winslow turned up within the next two hours they would have to play without him, and Wilkins would have to be put in to play right halfback.

Anxiously they waited, and they hoped against hope that the missing student would turn up, but when the time came to go on the field Winslow was still missing.

Wilkins was out with the other players, with his football uniform on, and he was told to take his place for the first half.

A great crowd was present to see the game.

Practically all the students from both colleges were present, and many sport-loving citizens from the villages. Among the latter were many pretty girls, fresh-faced and bright-looking, and dressed in their Sunday best.

The presidents and faculties of the two colleges were present, each with its own contingent of students and the citizens of the village of the same name as the college near which it was located.

Rivalry ran high between the colleges and villages, and each contingent was confident that its team would win.

Professor Marshfield was a widower, but he

had a daughter, a beautiful, rosy-cheeked, red-lipped, blue-eyed maiden of seventeen years. Winnie was her name, and she was indeed winning in looks and manners. She dearly loved to watch the students when engaged in athletic contests, and was always present at all the baseball, football, basketball and other games, when Wrightmore was playing with some opposing team, either Larchmount or elsewhere.

Near the center of the grandstand a little box had been built, extending out a few feet nearer the gridiron than the main stand, and in this box, on this afternoon sat Professor Marshfield and Winnie.

"Papa, isn't it too bad that the new halfback should have disappeared just at the time when they need him so badly on the team!" remarked Winnie, as they watched the two elevens taking their places on the field.

"Yes, Winnie; but that is not the worst of it. I am afraid that something serious has happened to the young man."

"I haven't seen him, papa, but they say he was a splendid player. As you say, however, much as we would like to have him here to play, the main thing would be to know that he is alive and well."

"You are right, Winnie; still, somehow I feel that he will turn up soon."

"I hope so, papa."

Near the professor's box sat Percy Silkwell and his immediate cronies, Small and Thorp—Wilkins was down on the gridiron—and perhaps a dozen fellows who had stuck to Silkwell, and who sympathized with him when he was thrashed by Winslow.

Silkwell was near enough so that he could hear and understand what was said by the professor and Winnie, and there was a peculiar look in his eyes as he gazed upon the fair face of the girl. The truth of the matter was that he was in love with Winnie, though she had never given him any encouragement. To the contrary, she had done all she could to discourage him, for she did not like him.

"If I thought there was any danger that you would take a liking to that scoundrel Winslow, he would never turn up here again," was the youth's thought. "I would give Grump the tip to put him out of the way for good and all. They would do it, too, for money—and I have the money, all right."

His eyes glowed viciously, for he hated Winslow, and the thought that the handsome young student would never appear to interfere with his plans for the future was a pleasing one.

"I may do it!" he whispered, viciously; "yes, I may do it."

At this moment the game began and instantly every eye was centered upon the contending teams.

It was Larchmount's kickoff, and their center sent the ball far up the field. It was caught by Wilkins, who started to race back with it, but he was successfully tackled before he had gone five yards and down he went, kerthump. What is worse, he lost his hold upon the ball, which went rolling away from him, and one of the Larchmount men pounced upon it like a hungry tiger, and lay upon it while both teams piled upon top of him, a mountain of squirming, struggling athletes.

This was bad, and a groan went up from the Wrightmore adherents, while wild cheers were given vent to by the Larchmount rooters.

"Larchmount! Larchmount! Rah, rah, rah!" was the cry.

And then:

"Larchmount! Larchmount!

Our boys will try;

They'll win this game—

They'll win or die!"

This went up in a grand chorus, followed by more wild cheering, and the Larchmount players, having the ball in their possession, within twenty-five yards of their opponents' goal-line, went to work like tigers in an attempt to force the ball over by means of fierce scrimmages.

When Percy Silkwell witnessed the playing of Wilkins, a grim smile of satisfaction came to his face.

"Julian did that on purpose," he thought. "He permitted himself to be tackled quickly, and he let go of the ball purposely, I know. Good! It means that Larchmount will win, and that I will be two hundred dollars to the good when this game comes to an end!"

Winnie Marshfield's face was a study when she saw the Larchmount players get the ball and begin beating the Wrightmore players slowly but surely back toward their goal-line.

"Oh, papa, isn't it too bad?" she murmured.

"Yes, Winnie; it looks as though our boys doomed to be beaten to-day."

"It was all Winkins's fault, papa. Oh, how I wish that Mr. Winslow—Harry, the Halfback, as they call him—were here to play the position! We would win then; I just know we would!"

And Percy Silkwell, who heard the words, frowned darkly and fairly ground his teeth.

"She has been made to think Winslow is a wonderful fellow just by hearing the students talk," he thought. "Well, he isn't here, and so can't help win the game, thanks to my good management!" and he chuckled in a satisfied manner.

"What's so funny?" asked Small.

"Why, don't you see? Wrightmore is getting beaten, Gene. Isn't that enough to make a fellow smile, especially when he has two hundred dollars wagered on the other team, eh?"

"Be careful; some one might hear you," warned Small.

Meanwhile the game was going on fiercely. The Larchmount eleven fought like tigers and managed to gain enough in three trials each time to entitle them to hold the ball, and at last, when still there remained only a few minutes of the first half, they got the ball across the line for a touchdown.

But in the try for goal they did not get the ball between the posts, so the half ended with the score five to nothing in their favor.

The Larchmount students and rooters in general put in the whole ten minutes that came between the halves in singing songs of victory and in cheering. They were confident that their eleven would win.

The Wrightmore students and adherents were silent; they, too, believed that the Larchmount team would win; but they hoped it would not, and they held themselves in readiness to lend all the moral support in their power the moment their

players gave them the least thing to be enthusiastic about.

The ten minutes were up, and the teams were just trotting onto the field from the dressing-room, when on the air rose a loud cheer from the Wrightmore students.

"Winslow! Winslow!" was the cry. "Harry, the Halfback, is coming! Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!"

Instantly there was great excitement. The people craned their necks, and looked, to see a young man, dressed in football clothes, coming toward the field on the run.

A half-smothered exclamation of amazement and rage, commingled with disappointment, escaped the lips of Percy Silkwell.

"Wouldn't that jar you?" he muttered. "Now how in the world did he manage to escape and get here?"

"Careful!" whispered Small. "Some one will hear you!"

An inarticulate growl was the only response, and then Silkwell gazed upon the approaching youth with eyes of hate.

"Play ball!" he cried to Captain Westley.

"What's the matter with you?" cried Curly Carwell. "Harry, the Halfback, is coming, and he's going to play halfback in the last half. Hurrah!"

A cheer went up from the students.

Parker and Westley ran to meet Winslow, and the former cried out, eagerly:

"Where have you been, Winslow? Why were you not here when the game began?"

"No time to explain now," was the reply. "I would have been here had I been able to get here, rest assured on that."

"We have needed you," said Westley; "we have needed you badly. The score is five to nothing against us."

They were walking along in front of the seats where the Wrightmore students and adherents sat, and suddenly Winnie Marshfield clapped her hands and cried:

"Harry, the Halfback, is here now and we will certainly win."

Winslow turned his head quickly and looked at the speaker. His eyes met those of the girl and in that instant it was all over with him. He was in love with the owner of the sweet voice and beautiful eyes.

Winnie blushed like a peony and dropped her eyes in confusion, but somehow she felt happier than she had felt a few moments before. She did not realize it as yet but, she was struck by the manly beauty of the handsome halfback, and was more than half in love with him.

"Who is the fairy, Westley?" queried Winslow.

"Why, that is Winnie Marshfield, the professor's daughter. Haven't you met her? I thought you knew her."

"No; this is the first time I have seen her."

"She is an enthusiast over athletic contents of all kinds; she would give her eyes if we could win."

"I'd win or die if I thought that I could at the same time win her eyes," said Winslow, with such earnestness that Westley looked at him keenly and remarked:

"Jove, you're struck, too, the same as all the

rest of us. Well, go in and win the game and maybe you will be able to win her eyes. If so, you will have better luck than the rest of us, though."

"I'll do my best on both counts," grimly.

"Good for you, and good luck to you."

At this moment Wilkins came up, looking angry and sullen.

"Look here, Westley," he said, "are you going to put me off and let this fellow play?"

"He is the regular man, Wilkins, so he will play his position."

"But he wasn't here to play when the game began, and I don't call it a square deal to put me off after I have——"

"Almost lost the game by losing the ball and letting Larchmount get it," called out Curly Carwell. Wilkins had spoken loud enough so that those in the seats had heard him.

"That's right; that's what he has done," cried Jimmy Oppen.

"Go way back and stand up, Wilkins!" from Charley Dayton.

"To your places all," ordered Captain Westley. "Come, Winslow."

With an inarticulate growl of rage, Wilkins made his way up to where Silkwell and his cronies sat, and they exchanged condolences in low tones.

Nobody paid any attention to them, however, as the game was now on. Everybody was eager to see how Winslow would play.

They soon saw. He played like a demon. It was Larchmount's kickoff and Winslow caught the ball and started on a run.

Away he went at racehorse speed, dodging, doubling, running this way and that, and occasionally he hurled a Larchmount would-be tackler out of his way as though he were a child. Winslow seemed to possess the strength of two or three youths.

Instantly the Wrightmore students sat up a cheer.

"A touchdown! A touchdown! Harry, the Halfback, will make it! Hurrah!" cried Jimmy Oppen, rising and dancing wildly about. "Go it, Harry! Go it, old man!"

"Yes, run, Harry! Run—run—run!" cried Winnie, also rising and standing erect, her hair blowing in the breeze, her blue eyes sparkling with eagerness and excitement.

Harry heard and recognized the voice, and it sent a thrill through his entire being. He suddenly became possessed of renewed energy, and he tore around the end, evading the guard, and away he went straight for the opposing team's goal-line.

Only one man was between him and the goal—the fullback.

As Harry, the Halfback, neared the Larchmount fullback, every one became as silent as death.

Would Harry make the goal?

Would the opposing man down him?

Closer and closer, and then, just as the Larchmount player made a dive to tackle the flying halfback, up into the air sprang Harry, the Halfback.

He went high above the other, alighted on his

feet and dashed across the goal-line for a touchdown.

And then—bedlam!

The Wrightmore students and adherents made a deafening din for five minutes at least and then became silent as Harry made ready to try for goal.

Presently he made the kick, and the ball sailed between the posts.

Again pandemonium.

Wrightmore now had six to Larchmount's five.

"We've got the game in our pocket now, fellows," said Westley, whose face was shining with joy. "All we have to do is to hold 'em."

Every Wrightmore student, with exception of the Silkwell crowd, was cheering for Harry, the Halfback, but one look that he got from the blue eyes of Winnie Marshfield did him more good and made him a thousand times happier than all the cheering of all the rest.

Again they lined up and the game was renewed.

It was stubbornly contested until nearly the end of the half, and then suddenly from out the midst of the players, just as a scrimmage had begun, shot Harry, with the ball under his arm.

"Another touchdown! Hurrah for Harry, the Halfback!" yelled Jimmy Oppen, and the cry was taken up by scores of throats.

And the wonderful young halfback did make a touchdown, in spite of all the opposing players could do. And in the try for goal he succeeded again, thus making the score Wrightmore twelve to Larchmount's five.

The game was resumed and played to the end of the half without either side scoring again.

Wrightmore had won—and all because of the wonderful work of Harry, the Halfback, who had indeed proven that he was entitled to be called "A footballist for fair."

"Well, Winslow, you undoubtedly won the game," said Westley, with a smile; "now go in and see if you can win that pair of eyes."

"I'm going to, Westley," was the quiet reply. "I don't know whether I will succeed, but I am going to do my best."

"You have my best wishes, old fellow."

"Thank you."

Harry, the Halfback, got another look from Winnie's eyes before he left the field, and he walked to the gymnasium in a daze of happiness. His companions for the most part thought he was happy because he had been instrumental in winning the football game, but Westley knew better.

It was a happy day for all the Wrightmore students and adherents save Silkwell and his crowd. They were disappointed and angry, and Silkwell himself was wild with rage, for not only had his revenge missed fire, but he had lost two hundred dollars as well.

"I'll get him yet. I hate him," thought he between his clenched teeth. "I'll fix it with Mr. Harry, the Halfback, and soon at that, or I'll know the reason why! I'll drive him away from Wrightmore or die trying! I hate him—oh, how I hate him!"

(To be continued.)

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ITEMS OF INTEREST**LOS ANGELES MEXICANS**

The Mexican population of Los Angeles is said to be the largest of any city in the world except the City of Mexico.

PLATINUM IN SIBERIA

Near the mouth of the great Yenisei River of Siberia, which flows north into the Arctic Ocean, what are said to be "magnificent deposits" of platinum have lately been discovered. Active prospecting now under way near the Polar Circle, it is added, is likely to reveal further deposits of the metal.

RENTING HATS

There is a hat shop just off Fifth Avenue, New York, that does a thriving business in the renting of fashionable hats. Women visitors in town for a few days pay a small sum to wear a hat from this shop to the theater or a dinner.

CHAIN OF SANDWICH STANDS RUN ON HONOR SYSTEM

A college student living in the San Fernando Valley, Cal., has established a chain of sandwich stands to be placed at leading road intersections, to be run on the honor system. Nobody will be in charge of the stands. Tourists passing by will stop, read the price sign, pick up the sandwich and drop the money in a box. The promoter figures a few losses from dishonest patrons, but this, he asserts, will be more than offset by the absence of overhead cost of operation. From daylight to dark he plans to travel, replenishing honor stands as fast as tourists eat up the supply.

RECONSTRUCTING TAIL OF HUGE DINOSAUR

Prof. Charles Gilmore, curator of the National Museum, Washington, D. C., is reconstructing the thirty-foot tail of a huge dinosaur discovered by him in Utah. The length of the complete animal was 80 feet, and the number of vertebrae in the tail alone is 32—just one less than man has in his whole spinal column. This job of reconstruction is so complicated that Prof. Gilmore does not expect to finish it before some time in 1927.

OIL-ELECTRIC CAR SETS 5,500-MILE RECORD

When D. Crombie, chief of transportation of the Canadian National Railways, reached Montreal recently he completed a round trip overland by rail between Montreal and Kemloops, B. C., in five days, twenty-two and a half hours. It was the fastest overland railroad journey of 5,500 miles ever made.

Mr. Crombie made the trip in a newly developed oil-electric car. He said:

"The report of that test makes it evident that by working along present lines we can solve, through the oil-electric car, not only interurban and branch-line traffic difficulties, but can revolutionize transcontinental traffic as well.

"The results of this test trip make it evident a single locomotive of this type could handle passenger trains clear across the continent without being relieved. Conceivably it could start with a sufficient supply of fuel to make the entire trip. It would result in fewer locomotives being required for a given train service and eliminate delays in changing engines at terminals.

LAUGHS

Benevolent Party—If I gave you five pennies and your little brother asked you for two of them, how many would you have? Enterprising Newsboy—Five.

Nell—So she's fallen in love with young Roxley. Belle—You don't say? Nell—Why, surely you heard about it? Belle—No; I merely heard she was going to marry him.

Hahoole—Nixt toime Oi pass wid a loidy, Mulligan, ye've got to remove yer hat! Mulligan—And suppose Oi refuse? Hahoole—Then, bedad, ye've got to remove yer coat.

"Do you suppose any one will ever invent a perpetual motion machine?" "It's been done long ago. I'll bet dollars to doughnuts there's one of 'em attached to my gas meter."

Teddy—I wish I hadn't licked Jimmy Brown this morning. Mamma—You see how wrong it was, don't you, dear? Teddy—Yes; 'cause I didn't know till noon that he was going to give a party.

Sims—While in Paris I paid five dollars in tips alone. Waiter (assistaing him on with his coat)—You must have lived there a good many years, sir!

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CURRENT NEWS

FISHING AND TRAPPING

Approximately 270,000 hunting and trapping licenses are issued to sportsmen and trappers in New York State annually. In addition, it is estimated that about 200,000 other individuals engage in angling and netting fish.

BUSINESS DOG

Roy, the best-known dog in London, is going out of business owing to old age. He is a collie-Newfoundland who walks around Euston railroad station with a money box on his neck, and in seven years he has collected more than \$15,000, mostly in pennies, for a railroad charity. All the regular passengers know him, and he knows the main line departures like a timetable.

ILLITERATE IN BROOKLYN

The percentage of illiterate men in Brooklyn, N. Y., is higher than the percentage of illiterate women, according to statistics offered by Joseph Caccavajo, statistical expert, published by the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce.

One out of every sixteen men in Brooklyn can neither read nor write, and one in every ten or eleven women can neither read nor write, the article says, and these men and women are without even the rudiments of an education. The actual number of illiterate persons ten years of age and over is 98,038. The number of foreign-born white persons in Brooklyn unable to speak English is 71,335, of whom 29,463 are males and 41,872 are females.

There are nearly 160,000 persons ten years of age and over "who are entirely devoid of any kind of an education, and in our midst there are more than 70,000 who cannot speak our language."

SKULLS AND 40 DINOSAUR EGGS FOUND IN GOBI

Penetration of Mongolia by American motor car was described at the American Museum of Natural History by Roy Chapman Andrews, who returned from his third expedition into the Gobi Desert with forty dinosaur eggs, the skulls of six new types of mammals and the tools of stone age people who lived in the heart of the desert.

Mr. Andrews said the skulls are valued at \$1,000,000 and the dinosaur eggs at \$200,000. They will be placed on exhibition at the Museum.

The scientists, headed by Mr. Andrews, traversed the Gobi Desert in touring cars and motor trucks. Mr. Andrews said the stone age people had used square bits of the shells of the dinosaur eggs for necklaces. He found, Mr. Andrews said, a Mongolian woman who had made bits of jewelry with the shells of the eggs.

She exchanged a fragment of a shell for half a cake of soap, the scientist related. The six mammalian skulls, according to Prof. Henry Fairfield Osborne, President of the museum, are from the age of reptiles, from twelve to fourteen million years ago, and are extremely rare.

MAMMOTH MAP OF UNITED STATES

The recent passage of a bill by Congress enables the government to carry to completion the largest and most comprehensive map of the United States—a great mother map that will represent, when completed, twenty years from now, an accurate topographical survey of every square inch of the vast territory that comprises the United States, writes Floyd Montgomery in "Popular Science Monthly."

This great map—the largest in the world—will not be in one piece, but will be composed of 6,000 sections, which, if placed together in one big pattern, would cover more than an acre of ground. So complete in detail will it be that anybody, living in any section of the country, will be able to find on the proper sheet the exact location of his house.

Delicate contour lines will draw the picture of the country's hills and valleys, plains and mountain ranges, canyons and waterways, including even its man-built landmarks. Using the map for reference, the route of a proposed project may be laid out without the engineer being on the ground. The only surveying necessary will be the actual job on hand.

What a treasure chart for the engineer who, seeking lines and levels for proposed penetration in unmapped areas, now must spend valuable time and often great sums of money for intricate surveying!

Work began on the survey for the map in 1879 and has progressed slowly, held back by lack of appropriations. Now, however, Congress has authorized the completion of the work and an appropriation of \$950,000 for the survey in the first year.

The total expenditure, with state cooperation, is placed at \$49,200,000.

Modern science in many ways aids in completing the map. Aerial photography plays an important part. The plane, carrying a photographer equipped with a panoramic camera, flies at an elevation of about 12,000 feet and the pictures are taken often enough so that they overlap. While the developing and photo-lithographing are in progress, control men make a few definite locations of known points, which are marked accurately on tracing linen and the work of fitting the aerial photographs begins.

The use of the airplane is in sharp contrast with the earlier days of the survey, when transportation and virgin country complicated the field workers' program of activity. Hostile Indians, too, were a cause for concern and very often surveying parties were escorted by detachments of United States soldiers as protection against possible attack.

The survey is a history in itself. Every line on the map will reveal much of romance and adventure for those who have had part in its making.

It is a tremendous undertaking. Yet when the last square inch of our vast country has been surveyed there will have been completed a treasure chart of priceless value.

FROM ALL POINTS

QUAINT DRY LAWS

In Constantinople the consumption of alcohol is rigorously forbidden in certain streets, but it is tolerated in others. There are wet streets and dry streets. The administration, which tries to think of everything, has designated as wet streets those near a police station.

ENGINES FED WITH PORK

The accident of fuel failure, suggested as possibly overtaking Polar flights, evoked a desperate remedy when Lieut. de Long, in a ship's steam pinnace, was engaged in his daring search in the Arctic for the American Polaris expedition.

Heavy seas put out the ship's furnace and drenched all the fuel carried on board. Matches had to be dried by being kept in contact with the skin. With these, damp shavings, soaked in oil to render them combustible, were ignited and thereafter the furnace was started and the coal dried out by using as fuel the ship's supplies of pork.

"NEEDLE'S EYE" A GATE

The "needle's eye" referred to in the New Testament is a small gate in the Wall of Jerusalem, not a sewing needle, in the opinion of Job Negeim, twenty-three-year-old Arab guide in the Holy Land, who is studying music at the Pittsburgh State Teachers College, Kansas.

The Biblical passage to which this modern Job has adduced a new meaning is in Mark 10-25, wherein Jesus chided those who "trust in riches," saying: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

"The needle's eye," says Negeim, "commonly misunderstood as the eye of a sewing needle, is known to Jerusalem as a small gate within a larger gate in the city walls. It is for the use of pedestrians after the larger gate is closed for the night for protection. The gate is so low that an average-sized man must stoop low to go through it."

NOTED PEANUT AUTHORITY HAD PICTURESQUE LIFE

Dr. George W. Carver, head of the research department of Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute of Alabama, is as picturesque as his career. About six feet tall he resembles more the typical Southern Negro of half a century ago than the much sought-after lecturer and honored scientist of the day.

Up to the time Dr. Carver was nineteen years old he rode on a half fare ticket on the railroads, his growth having been retarded from the time he was five. When he was nineteen years old he started to grow in a most alarming manner, and in one year he had attained his present height.

Today he is one of the few American scientists who have been honored by the election as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Great Britain. He is the world's leading authority on peanuts and sweet potatoes, with hundreds of discoveries to his credit. He was born in slavery and was unable to read or write until after he was twenty years old.

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BRIEF BUT POINTED

DIG UP MASTODON TUSK

Working under the direction of an expert from the American Museum of Natural History, laborers have uncovered the tusk of the huge mastodon discovered recently near Monroe, N. Y. The tusk measured more than four feet in length and is about eight inches in diameter at the large end.

It is believed one-half of the tusk has disintegrated as the diameter indicates it was nearly nine feet long.

OVERCOAT STOLEN 11 TIMES IN A DAY

Sun kissed Los Angeles was a bit chilly, at least it must have seemed that way to some, for Policeman Charles E. Dill could not have arrested eleven men for stealing his one overcoat. Dill left the overcoat in a parked car, and every time an overcoat thief rose to the bait he made an arrest. By the time eleven suspects had been removed to the city jail, Dill donned the warmth giving garment himself and called it a day, a chilly day.

"HOME, SWEET HOME."

"Home, Sweet Home," was first sung in public on May 8, 1823, at the Covent Garden Theater in London. John Howard Payne (1792-1852) wrote the song as part of the book of an opera called "Clari, the Maid of Milan." Henry Rowley Bishop, the English composer, set the words to music. It is said that "Home, Sweet Home" can be sung without the aid of written words or music by a larger number of people than any other song in the world. John Howard Payne was born in New York on June 9, 1791. When a boy of 12 he edited a little weekly paper for children which he called "The Fly." He early wrote acceptable poetry, studied elocution and became a successful actor and playwright. He was the first American actor to appear on the boards in Great Britain. From 1842 to 1845 and again from 1851 until his death in 1852 he was U. S. Consul at Tunis, Africa. In 1883 his body was removed from Tunis to Washington, D. C.

GIGANTIC PEACH TREES

Peach trees that grow fifty feet high have been found wild in China. Buds of these for propagation have just been received by the horticultural division of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station at New Brunswick. These were included in a consignment of twenty-two new types, varieties and species of peaches from the foreign seed and plant introduction bureau of the United States Department of Agriculture.

In 1922 a plant explorer in China reported that he had discovered the Puerhfu, a peach tree, fifty feet in height, growing wild in the mountains at an altitude of 5,500 feet; also another tree with fruit of a different character growing to a height of about forty to fifty feet. The horticultural division has been trying since that time to secure buds from the United States Department of Agriculture in order to test these trees in New Jersey.

The peach is an exceedingly fast growing tree and if these immigrants grow as large in America

as they do in China they may be more adapted to the forestry industry than to peach growing. Nevertheless, it is thought that they may possibly have valuable qualities for breeding work, which is now being so extensively carried on at the experiment station.

HUMIDITY TESTS

That the human body, in a state of rest and in still air, cannot endure indefinitely a temperature higher than 90 degrees Fahrenheit with 100 per cent. relative humidity, has been determined by Department of the Interior investigators at the Pittsburgh experiment station of the Bureau of Mines, co-operating with American Society of Heating and Ventilating Engineers.

In the course of the tests it was noted that the heavier and stouter men of the experiments, when subjected to uncomfortably hot temperatures, lost more weight than the lighter and thinner men, but as a rule could endure such temperatures for a longer period and complained less of the exhaustion which followed. Loss of weight in the subjects experimented with gradually increased with an increase in atmospheric temperature.

When the subject drank ice water he immediately gained in weight and in all cases the subject within twenty-four hours usually regained the entire weight lost. Subjects who drank ice water freely after exposure to high temperatures felt no ill effects, tending to disprove the assumption that such action develops severe cramps. The pulse rate rather than the rise in bodily temperature apparently determines the extent of the discomfort experienced by the subject.

A LONELY ISLAND INDEED.

The loneliest island in the world is said to be Tristan da Cunha, which is situated in the South Atlantic, nearly midway between Cape Town and Buenos Aires. This island, a speck in the ocean possessing an area of only 18 square miles, is inhabited by a Crusoe colony. The nearest inhabited island is Napoleon's isle of St. Helena. The soil is covered with lava, stone, ashes and scattered rocks rent into huge fissures. Ships visit Tristan at varying intervals, sometimes two years passing without a sail or other ship or a word from the outside world reaching this strange colony of about 100 souls. The people are of different nationalities, but the vogue is English, as these tiny islands are under the British flag. The occupations of the Tristanites are fishing and farming, both in a rough sort of way; for fish, though plentiful, are coarse and oily; the live stock runs small and poor. Tristan has a history running back to its discovery by the Portuguese in 1596, but no one lived upon it until there came a pirate named Lambert and two companions. Lambert was probably murdered by his companions, but his treasure in Spanish doubloons is still hidden in the island, it is said, between two waterfalls. There is no government on Tristan. Every man does that which is right in his own eyes, and the missionary, if he is resident, acts as arbitrator and settles disputes.

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AGENTS: NO COMPETITION selling spectacles, guaranteed to satisfy, only \$3.98. Pay daily. We deliver collect. Nearly everybody buys. \$10.00 - \$25.00 daily easy. True Fit Optical Co., CW117, 1528 W. Adams St., Chicago, Ill.

AGENTS—WRITE FOR FREE SAMPLES. Sell Madison "Better-Made" shirts for large Manufacturer, direct to wearer. No capital, or experience required. Many earn \$100 weekly and bonus. Madison Mfgs., 503 Broadway, New York.

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HELP WANTED

DETECTIVES needed everywhere. Big pay, experience unnecessary, easily learned, 17 to 45, write Earl Wilcox, 1407 Lafayette Ave, SE, Grand Rapids, Mich.

DETECTIVES NEEDED EVERYWHERE. Work home or travel, experience unnecessary. Write George R. Wagner, former Govt. Detective, 1968 Broadway, N. Y.

PERSONAL

ARE YOU LONESOME? Write Betty Lee, Inc., Box 820 City Hall Station, New York City. Stamp appreciated.

LONELY HEARTS—I have a sweetheart for you. Exchange letters; make new friends. Efficient, confidential and dignified service. Members everywhere. Eva Moore, Box 908, Jacksonville, Florida.

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MARRY—Lonely Hearts, join our club, we have a companion for you, many worth from \$5,000 to \$50,000. Descriptions, photos, introductions free. Send no money. Standard Cor. Club, Grayslake, Ill.

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SWEETHEARTS for everybody. Stamped envelopes for proposal. The Lily Club, Station H, Cleveland, Ohio.

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SONGWRITERS

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MISCELLANEOUS

FOR A DIME (coin) I will tell the day of the week for any date for the last 400 years. G. E. Hayes, Box 157, Newberry, S. C.

TOBACCO OR SNUFF HABIT CURED OR no pay. \$1.50 if cured. Remedy sent on trial. Superba Co., N4, Baltimore, Maryland.

DITMARS IMPORTS SNAKES AND SERUM.

Raymond L. Ditmars, curator of reptiles, and mammals for the New York Zoological Park, returned recently on the Munson lines Southern Cross, bringing a powerful new serum for the treatment of rattlesnake poisoning and several species of Brazilian snakes never before seen in this country.

The serum is the first concentrated serum made at the Sao Paulo Institute in Brazil for the treatment of bites of American rattlers. It is made from venom collected here and sent to the institute a year ago.

Mr. Ditmars had taken with him on

his last previous trip one fluid gallon of rattlesnake poison, collected from 5,000 snakes. This, he said, would enable the institute at Sao Paulo to manufacture serum to combat the bites of American rattlers for thirty years.

In the hold of the ship, contained in boxes, were thirty-five venomous snakes that will be added to the Bronx Zoo. Among them were two specimens never seen alive in the United States, the urutu, a black snake with a series of oval yellow markings, and the jararacacu, a species somewhat like the American copperhead, but larger. Also he had a harmless coral snake, whose bands of red, black and yellow, Mr. Ditmars said, made it look like a college necktie.

WOMAN NEAR DEATH BY STINGS OF BEES.

Mrs. J. P. Ellis, her son, Cokely, A. C. Harrison and William Foy have just had the closest brush with death they are likely ever to have and live to tell about it.

Mrs. Ellis, who lives on the Livermore Road, near Calhoun, Ky., climbed into a peach tree to gather fruit. She lost her balance and fell into a group of beehives. The bees swarmed out and in a minute covered her body. Her right arm and collarbone were broken in the fall, and she was so badly injured that she could not move.

For half an hour the woman was helpless, while the bees swarmed upon her body. Mr. Harrison, a merchant, and Cokely Ellis finally noticed her plight and ran to her aid.

The men called on Mr. Foy, who joined them in trying to rescue Mrs. Ellis. The bees promptly attacked the men and stung each of them hundreds of times as they carried Mrs. Ellis from the yard.

First-aid treatment was provided for the four persons, who have great swellings over their bodies. Two physicians attended Mrs. Ellis, and after treatment announced their belief that she would recover.

EVERY DROP OF WATER IN PARIS MUST BE PAID FOR

The price of water has just gone up again in Paris—in common with the price of gas, electricity and bus rides. The reason is that the municipal income of Paris is not equal to its expenditure.

All apartment buildings and dwellings in Paris that have water have meters. The meter records every drop of water supplied, and every drop must be paid for.

The origin of this excessive caution in the use of water was the pressing danger, now almost entirely eliminated, of the Paris supply running dry in time not only of severe, but even of the most trifling drought. In this connection it is interesting to read in a column reprint of one of the Paris dailies, taken from its own pages of 100 years ago, that the Seine water was low, muddy and smelly in July, 1825. The editor of those days added to that information a severe criticism of the City Administration for "lack of consideration of the public health," in that the citizens were still allowed to come down to the river and fill receptacles with the fetid water for drinking purposes.

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TUT-ANKH-AMEN'S 13 FINGER RINGS

The preliminary examination of the mummy of Tut-ankh-Amen bears witness to the great refinement of the goldsmith's art of the eighteenth dynasty. Among the most important objects found at the unwrapping lately were thirteen finger rings in two clusters and twenty circlets.

The whole chest was covered with magnificently encrusted gold pectorals, two of which were in the form of the upper Egyptian vulture Nehkbet and the lower Egyptian serpent Buto. Beneath these were smaller, but even more beautiful, pectorals, intricately designed, including winged scarabs and sacred eyes.

There was also a marvelous flying vulture, exemplifying the finest goldsmith's art. This was encrusted with lapis lazuli and carnelian, and resembles jewelry of the middle empire in its refinements.

The body of the Pharaoh is in a bad state of preservation, but it is hoped that the head, from which the protective mask has not been removed, will prove to be in better condition. Doctors who have made an examination maintain that the King was about eighteen years of age at the time of his death.

Besides the precious stones and jewelry, the investigators are gratified at the amount of religious data discovered.



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